



PRACTICE UPDATE

Concrete and masonry cutting and drilling

Scope: People using concrete and masonry cutting and drilling equipment and anyone who is nearby.

Definition: Use of concrete and masonry cutting, and drilling equipment creates wide range of hazards, such as silica dust, toxic exhaust fumes, saw kick-back, blade fracture, falling walls, electrocution, vibration, noise, slips, falls and manual handling.

Key Information: This code of practice covers:

- diamond-blade and water-cooled circular saws;
- saws powered by electricity, petrol engines, compressed air (pneumatic) or hydraulics;
- saws that are either hand-held, fixed to tracks on surfaces to be cut, or fitted to trolleys that may be hand moved or propelled by a motor; and
- power drills and core drills used for concrete and other masonry.

The most likely risks of injury or harm come from:

• flying saw fragments
• saw kick-back, push-back or pull-in
• out-of-control or free-running cutting machines
• falling concrete and masonry
• falling from inadequate scaffolding or an inadequate work platform

• noise
• electrocution
• hazardous dusts from dry cutting and drilling, such as silica dust,
• slips, trips and falls
• manual handling or strain injuries

• vibration damage to circulation, nerves and joints; and
• suffocation or poisoning from hazardous fumes or gases emitted by petrol motors and other equipment or damaged gas supply services

Actions: Providing information, instruction, training and supervision is essential in all concrete and masonry cutting and drilling operations.

Completion of a Risk assessment is required before commencing any cutting or drilling works. A SWMS may be required dependent on the risks identified.

Never use a hand-held saw for inverted cutting. This is probably the most dangerous way of all to use a hand-held concrete saw.

Avoid working alone.

References:

[Concrete and Masonry Cutting and Drilling](#)

Who do you call with questions?

If you have any queries, please contact Health and Safety on 9266 4900 or email healthandsafety@curtin.edu.au.

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