

Safety Lessons I've Learned

Workshop safety is one of those things that just seems to go into one ear and out the other with many people. Sometimes, the best deterrent comes when you hear about the consequences someone else has had to pay for not paying attention.

From time-to-time, we receive letters and phone calls from Shopsmith customers who have had such experiences. When that happens, we'll be sharing them with you – right here.

MARK V owner has close call with 18" drill bit!

...learns that it's always a good idea to check your MARK V's speed setting BEFORE turning on the power!

"I've been a MARK V owner since 1984 and consider myself a pretty safe power tool operator. This letter...is a testament that no matter how safe an operator you think you are, accidents can happen when you let your guard down.

In my case, I failed to decrease my MARK V's speed prior to turning the power off when I converted from Table Saw to Drill Press. Here is a brief scenario of what happened.

My MARK V had been set-up in Table Saw mode and I converted to Drill Press mode to bore some 1/8" pilot holes through the 4" side of some 2 x 4's. I was planning to use an extended length (18") bit and had everything set up and ready to drill. I applied the power and the bit began to whip violently due to the combination of high speed and its 18" length.

I immediately reached up to power off my MARK V. However, in that second or two, the bit snapped off at the chuck and impaled itself in my abdomen. Fortunately, for some unknown reason, the bit didn't remain in my abdomen and fell to the floor. Initially, I thought I had only suffered a surface wound. However, after going to urgent care, it was determined that I had internal bleeding and I was immediately taken to surgery.

Fortunately, the drill bit missed all of my internal organs and I was discharged from the hospital yesterday. I just wanted to share this with you in the hopes that MARK V owners always reduce the machine's speed to minimum before turning it off...and always check the speed dial before they apply the power.

This small oversight almost cost me my life and I wouldn't want to see other MARK V owners suffer as I did.

*David Hauswald
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