

Wall Sawing Safety

Wall sawing is one of the most challenging and dangerous methods of concrete cutting. It is the responsibility of both the owner and operator to maintain a safe working saw. Sawing openings in concrete and masonry walls requires strict attention to equipment safety by conducting frequent inspections for proper functionality and/or damage to the equipment before every job.

- All manufacturer manuals should be read before use. They will provide the operator with a lot of useful information regarding operation and safety of the equipment, such as distance of anchor sets for thick brackets, blade RPM in ratio to blade size and procedures for conversions such as flush kits.
- Make sure the roller assembly is correctly adjusted. Check the integrity of the blade shaft, gearbox attachment, guard support, drive mechanisms and carriage body.
- Clean and inspect the blade flanges and arbor before mounting any blade. Inspect the blade for damage and do not use if the following conditions exist: core cracks, missing or broken segments, arbor hole damage or loss of blade tension. Missing segments can sometimes be replaced but blades with cracked or damaged cores must be discarded.
- Wall saws are powered by electric, air or hydraulic motors, and are specially designed and equipped so they are safely and securely anchored for cutting vertical surfaces. Never operate a gas powered or diesel powered unit in an enclosed or confined area.
- Track brackets and hold-down plates must be securely mounted to the wall being cut using the proper size expansion anchors. Each wall saw is different and may require special or custom-designed anchors, so be sure to refer to the equipment manual. Be sure to know and use the correct amount of track brackets for the type of saw and length of track.
- Operators should wear approved personal protective equipment such as goggles, earplugs or ear muffs, hard hats, gloves and steel-toed shoes at all times while operating a wall saw.
- Operators should never work in a position that puts their body in line with a rotating saw blade. An operator should make sure he or she is well balanced and working on a stable surface. Never work above the saw on a ladder.
- Before a piece of concrete is dropped or craned out, make sure the area is clear of pedestrian traffic. All personnel in the vicinity of the opening should be warned to stay clear. Barricade tape or warning signs should be used if necessary.
- Always inspect both sides of the wall to be cut prior to cutting to identify potential hazards.
- Barricade tape or warning signs should be used on the opposite side of the wall from where you are cutting to keep people from being too close to the wall during the cutting operation.
- Always discuss with the customer the possibility of conduits imbedded in the wall, especially when cutting CMU walls. Use lock out/tag out procedures as necessary.

It is important for wall saw operators to be thoroughly familiar with the operation of the machinery and to be well schooled in the requirements for maintaining a safe and secure job site. Individual wall saw manufacturers should have additional information for the safe operation of their equipment. Consult the instruction manual that accompanies a particular wall sawing system or contact the supplier for information before operating.

Wall Sawing Safety Quiz

The following statements should be answered with “True” or “False.” Answers below.

1. It is acceptable to operate a gas or diesel powered unit in a confined space or enclosure.
2. Operators should wear approved PPE when operating a wall saw.
3. It is not necessary to clean and inspect the blade flanges before each use.
4. Operators may work above the saw on a ladder with supervision.
5. It is important for wall saw operators to make sure the area is clear of pedestrian traffic before a piece of concrete is dropped or craned out.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Answers:

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True