

Preventing misuse of angle grinders

What is the problem?

Workers fitting saw blades to angle grinders and using them as cutting tools.

What are the risks?

The blade saw can jam or kickback (the disk thrusts back towards the user) and the exposed blade can strike the operator.

The blade's teeth or hardened tips can also become projectiles if they detach at high speed.

A worker was seriously injured while using an angle grinder fitted with a tungsten-tipped saw blade. The angle grinder was being used to cut a hole in the top of an aluminium fuel tank when the saw blade jammed, causing the angle grinder to kickback onto the worker.

Angle grinders are not designed to operate as power saws, as they:

- are not fitted with sufficient guarding to protect the operator if the blade jams, disintegrates or kicks back
- are not fitted with retractable guards that provide the same safety a power saw provides
- rotate at faster speeds and generate greater torque than power saws.

What is a solution to the problem?

Put in place risk control measures to eliminate or minimise risks by:

- using the right tool for the job. Circular saw blades should never be fitted to an angle grinder
- only using blades specified by the manufacturer of the angle grinder (if in doubt, check with the manufacturer before fitting and using)
- using a safer alternative method of cutting for the task (such as a power drill, reciprocating saw, jigsaw with an aluminium blade or a purpose built cold metal cutting power saw)
- wearing adequate eye and face protection when using an angle grinder. Hearing protection and flame-resistant clothing should also be worn
- ensuring workers are adequately trained in the safe use of angle grinders.

Further Information

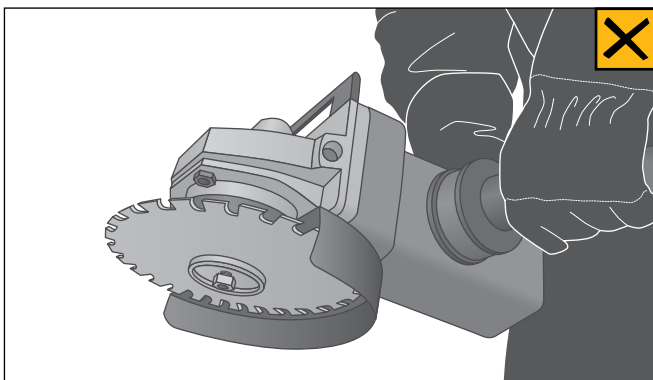
WorkSafe Advisory Service

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The problem



Circular saw blades should not be fitted to an angle grinder.

A solution



Only use angle grinders for the specific material and purpose for which they are designed.