

**Tool Type** Thickness Sander

**Experience** Advanced

**Injury Severity** Needed Medical Attention

**Description**

This happened to a workmate of mine quite a while ago, but I cringe everytime I think back. He was working on a full sized industrial belt sander as he had done for years and was usually very competent. Our employers started to use a de-clogging stick to try to get more life from the belts. These sticks were made of a rubbery material which you had to open the safety panels of the sander and push the stick against the belt. I would imagine that they are outlawed now. The powdered remains of these sticks would fall onto guide rollers at the bottom of the belt. My workmate decided for some reason to use his fingers to wipe the dust off the rollers. As these rollers were close to the sander belt, the belt grabbed his fingers and pulled his hand right under the belt. His screams chill me to this day. The hand surgeon at the hospital immediately prepared for amputation as soon as he looked at it, but almost miraculously, one of the best hand surgeons in the world was on a visit, and he decided to try to save the hand, and he did. Needless to say, a large sum was settled.

**Advice**

Never get complacent when using powerful machines, especially employers. If an employer expects you to override the safety features so he can save a few pounds, then refuse.

**Tool Type** Thickness Sander

**Experience** Intermediate

**Injury Severity** Close Call

**Description**

Finish sanding a board on a drum sander which was too long/heavy to be sufficiently supported by the motorised feed bed.

As the pass was nearing completion, used right hand with fingers underneath to guide the board in.

Fingers got caught between board and feed bed, and could not reach the cutoff with my left hand, so had to frantically wind the depth adjustment wheel to release pressure on my right hand.

Got away with bruising.

**Advice**

Use supplementary support tables where possible.

Ensure cut off switches positioned for easy access by BOTH hands. Fit an additional switch if that supplied is in an awkward place, or use a secondary foot switch.

Ensure anything that might be caught is in clear sight when feeding material into a machine - eg fingers AND thumbs on top.