

SOLENT GUILD OF WOODCARVERS & SCULPTORS

WOODCARVING SAFETY GUIDELINES

The following are some basic health and safety notes. The list is non-exhaustive. Just use common sense.

1. Keep your chisels and gouges sharp. A blunt tool is a dangerous tool as more effort is required leading to possible slippage. It is good practice to sharpen/hone your tools at the end of (and during) every session.
2. Most chisels and gouges are two-handed unless you are using a mallet. Always carve away from yourself (and others) and keep your fingers behind the cutting edge.
3. Do not attempt to catch a falling tool. It is much safer to re-sharpen a gouge fallen on the floor rather than cut yourself trying to catch or even worse to hit it and it cut's someone else.
4. Wear appropriate clothing including shoes. No flip flops or open toes shoes/sandals.
5. Do not use your carving tool as 'a conductor's baton', i.e. do not use it to point or gesture.
6. Keep tools on the bench with sharp edges pointing the same way. Some professional carvers leave the sharp edge pointing to themselves, as it is quicker to select the gouge required, while others have the sharp edge away from themselves.
7. If you are using knives then it is recommended you wear slash-proof gloves. An article in the Woodcarving Magazine No. 110 is well worth reading.
8. Ensure your carving is held securely in a vice or on the bench. Using non-slip matting may be beneficial.
9. Have a first aid kit available.
10. Consider being up-to-date with tetanus jabs.
11. Some woods are toxic so be careful especially when sanding.
12. When using finishing products, e.g. sanding sealers, oils, stains, etc. follow manufacturer's instructions and in a well ventilated area. Some oil impregnated rags can spontaneously ignite so they should be disposed of safely; consider washing them and then lay out flat to dry. Do not place a 'screwed-up rag' used for oiling in a waste bin containing shavings.