

Dan Jonke

From: "Rick Melton" <rick.melton@milwaukeeemakerspace.org>
Date: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 10:32 PM
To: <info@milwaukeeemakerspace.org>; <members@milwaukeeemakerspace.org>
Attach: Professional Cabinet Saw - Sawstop.pdf
Subject: Woodshop Proposal - Norwich Sawstop

Board and Members,

On Tuesday July 2nd 2024, the Milwaukee Makerspace had the first table saw-related injury that we are aware of. The injury was avoidable. And the member in question has indicated as such. The fact that the member used some of what was instructed and kept the blade low enough avoided more serious injury.

We understand that the woodshop has tools that are inherently dangerous. It is impossible to make the woodshop 100% safe all the time no matter what, but we feel strongly that we can make it more safe as a result of this incident.

"Getting a Sawstop" is an issue that has come up at the Milwaukee Makerspace for as long as the space has existed (from what we're told). Some say that we don't need them because our two hours of usage instruction followed by 45 minutes of differences usage instruction properly prepares members to safely use all the woodshop tools. Which to date, has overall. But this incident suggests that revisiting training, and equipment availability is critical.

Others say that woodworking is inherently dangerous, and people should just know better. The reality is people don't know what they don't know, particularly on some of our older tools. Maybe, if someone is brand new, they need to get more training on the saw than just one day? To help establish good habits? Some users that know their limits do ask for additional help. We give it to them, but others do not, so we have to assume they feel comfortable with the equipment, and know their limitations.

Older eras of tools have great value for people who have experience using woodworking tools. This is absolutely not our usage case. The vast majority of members are learning to use woodworking tools for the first time at MMS, or at the very least have limited knowledge, and as such don't have experience using industrial machines. The woodshop is the gateway for new members, they see the woodshop, go through training then more often than not, move on to other areas. Please note, we are not suggesting that older tools are inherently more dangerous. But in the eyes of a new member that has limited experience, it isn't necessarily the best tool for them to use.

Of course, extensive, one-on-one training is a perfectly good alternative to procuring safer tools. Unfortunately, our insurance situation banning paid classes and a limited number of qualified woodworkers able to volunteer what would be a significant amount of time has prevented the availability of this higher level of instruction.

It takes ONE mistake to remove a limb or cause significant bodily harm with these tools. Not all of the woodshop tools have a convenient Sawstop safety equivalent. The table saws do.

What follows below is the plan to increase member safety using currently available technology:

We bring this proposal to procure one new Sawstop table saw by the end of August at a cost of \$5,627. This would only be for the Norwich location woodshop, configured as described in the PDF document attached to this proposal (professional cabinet saw-sawstop.pdf). We are asking the board to consider the safety, desires, and liability issues discussed here and on the email list when making the decision to help fund this upgrade in equipment. There's a reason so many professional woodworkers use SawStops. They just work. We want our

members as safe as we can, within the confines of what we offer.

Safety

The safety benefit of a table saw that retracts a blade from the cut path fast enough to prevent serious injury is clear. Instead of cutting a finger off, the saw will sacrifice the blade. While there is also a bypass mode on the safety system, it will not be used by membership (only area champions will have the key). The user interfaces are current and the button arrangement is designed to be much more intuitive.

Training

The Lenox table saw takes about 45 minutes to train during the first woodshop training. It involves the use of a crosscut sled which is only used at the Lenox location. The current training for the sliding table saw at Norwich takes another hour, not to mention the second Norwich table saw. This new saw will require additional training. Our plan is to migrate to a separate training model where instead of having Lenox being the prerequisite training to use Norwich. Each woodshop would have it's own training program. This effort is being worked out among the trainers and will happen independent to this proposal.

Consistency

The Sawstop will have a built-in crosscut sled, giving consistency for use. They will offer all current table saw capabilities and a standard riving knife, as well as the aforementioned safety improvements.

Costs

The woodshop will happily give the \$2000.00 we have in uncommitted funds to the cost.

Costs related to the acquisition and usage of these saws are as follows:

Near term: Approximately \$5,627.00 for all necessary accessories, 2 extra blade cartridges, and a zero-clearance plate.

Long term: Once acquired, the woodshop will carry all costs associated with the saws. Costs include blades and blade brake cartridges. Members who trigger the brake system will be required to replace the brake and blade, which currently costs \$110.99 (less than the average ER visit co-pay). We will keep the standard table saw at Norwich as a backup. Policy will have to be written to ensure that members know that using wet wood, or slabs on this saw without verifying it's water content, it might trigger the brake, in that instance, as well as potential accidents, members would have to pay for the replacement. The woodshop will work with the board to ensure that policies enacted to explain this are well documented and circulated so everyone is aware of the risks and outcomes. Sawstop will reimburse the cartridge cost if an accident would have occurred. This would be the responsibility of the member to work out with Sawstop.

Thank you for reading this far, and considering this proposal. We want to go another 15 years without an incident in the woodshop (at the very least).

Best,

Rick Melton, Kyle White, Jerry Kahn

Woodshop Champions



Virus-free. www.avg.com