

DRILL PRESS SAFETY

The lowly drill press should be considered one of the most hazardous tools in the shop. It seems so innocent and unthreatening that it tends to lull the user into a false sense of security. Once there, all it takes is a loose sleeve or strand of hair, an unnoticed piece of jewelry, or a forgotten pair of safety glasses and it can injure or maim an unsuspecting user with alarming speed. Common injuries on the drill press include broken wrists and fingers, amputated fingers, scalplings and eye injuries. All of this potential mayhem can easily be avoided by following a few simple, common sense rules.

- NEVER wear gloves when operating a drill press. This is the most common cause of serious accidents involving the drill press. When caught on the spinning bit, the glove can break or remove fingers and thumbs or your entire hand.
- For the same reason, never use a drill press while wearing long sleeves. A loose sleeve can pull a hand or arm into the drill just like a glove. Roll them up.
- Before using the drill press, be sure any long hair is tied back or tucked under a hat and all rings and watches are removed. It doesn't take a vivid imagination to realize what can happen if your hair gets caught in a drill bit spinning at several thousand rpm.
- NEVER hold a part in your hand when drilling. If (when) the drill catches, the part will be ripped from your hand and thrown. Clamp the part to the table or use the provided drill press vise. Also be sure the vise is rotated so it is against the column of the drill press so it can't spin.
- Always wear safety glasses when using the drill press. Drills break, chips fly and you don't want either of them to end up in your eye.
- Accidents with spinning machinery happen FAST. Don't think that if a sleeve or a piece of jewelry gets snagged on a drill, you can just pull away. The damage will have already happened before you even have time to react.

Machines such as the drill press are mindless and uncaring. It makes no difference to them if they are drilling a hole in a piece of metal, or winding up clothing, flesh, muscle or bone. There is a video on YouTube that everyone who works with rotating machinery should watch. It is an industrial accident that was recorded by a surveillance camera and involves an unskilled young man sanding a piece of shafting on a lathe. He made a number of mistakes, but the one that got him was holding the sandpaper in one hand while wearing long sleeves. He survived the accident relatively unscathed, but he could have just as easily been killed. The video is good to watch because there is little to no blood, the victim survived and it illustrates how quickly you can be caught and rendered totally helpless in that situation. Don't think that the lowly drill press isn't capable of causing the same sort of mayhem, it is. The link is:

<http://youtu.be/N9grSq-TWMQ>