



Melville Group of The Woodturners Association of Western Australia (Inc.)

SAFE WORK PROCEDURE THICKNESSER MACHINE

SPECIFIC DANGERS OF A THICKNESSER MACHINE

- ✓ A Thicknesser Machine has an automatic feed for the timber and, therefore, is safer and easier to use than a Planing Machine. However, care must still be exercised to avoid personal injury.
- ✓ A Thicknesser Machine has concealed blades when timber is being machined but exposed blades when no timber is in the machine. Hands must be kept out of the machine when it is turned on.
- ✓ Hands could be pulled or fed into the machine if allowed to become too close causing severe injury.
- ✓ The depth of cut must be appropriate for the width and hardness of the timber.
- ✓ All materials must be free of embedded metal. It is recommended that recycled material is only used if completely screened with a metal detector for embedded metal.
- ✓ Painted timber is abrasive causing excessive wear on the blades. Paint should be removed with a hand plane before machining.
- ✓ Dirty timber is also abrasive and should be thoroughly washed before machining.

GENERAL SAFETY ASPECTS

- ✓ Do not use this machine unless you have been instructed in its safe use and operation.
- ✓ **Covered footwear, eye protection (Minimum safety glasses or goggles) and hearing (muffs or plugs) protection must be worn at ALL times by the operator** and any other person in the near vicinity of the thicknesser.
- ✓ Long or loose hair must be contained, and clothing must be close fitting.
- ✓ Ensure the work area is free of any trip hazards or obstructions before commencing operations. Keep the work area clear of such hazards while working.
- ✓ The thicknesser must always be operated by only one person. This includes turning the machine on/off and feeding the timber into the thicknesser. Please note that a second person may be needed to support longer pieces of timber as it is machined. It is also common practice for two persons to use the machine – one feeding the timber in and the other holding the timber as it exits the Machine.
- ✓ Ensure assistants or bystanders are not at any risk from the thicknessing operation.

PRE-OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

- ✓ Do not use faulty equipment. Immediately report faults to the convenor or persons responsible and, if appropriate, tag out the planer.
- ✓ Initially, the depth of cut of each length of timber is determined by measuring the maximum thickness along the plank. As this frequently involves some estimation, adjust the machine so it will accommodate timber slightly larger than the thickness of the timber. For example, if the timber measures say 23mm thick, then set the machine to 24 or 25mm for the first cut. Pass the timber through the machine and adjust the depth of cut as necessary.
- ✓ Check the operation of the switch (start/stop).
- ✓ Blades should be changed only by authorised persons.
- ✓ Always start the machine before feeding in timber.
- ✓ Use dust extraction if fitted.



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OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

- ✓ Always feed material evenly and smoothly **according to the grain**. Slight forward pressure is sometimes needed. If excessive forward pressure is needed to push the timber through, then the table surface will need to be lubricated. With the machine turned off, rub wax or a bar of soap over the table.
- ✓ Excessive noise when machining is an indication that the blades are blunt and need replacing.
- ✓ Keep your hands clear of the machine, never allowing them to be fed in with the timber.
- ✓ Engage the assistance of another person to support the end of the timber when it is very long.
- ✓ The depth of cut is determined by the width and hardness of the timber. A thicknesser will usually machine away about 1mm or more. Wide hardwood boards may require a smaller cut such as 0.3mm or 0.5mm. The machine should never be set so that the motor is labouring. It should sound like it is running freely.
- ✓ A better quality cut is made if the timber moves steadily through the machine. If the timber stops advancing, then the surface finish will be uneven.
- ✓ Never leave the machine running unattended.
- ✓ Before making any adjustments, switch off the thicknesser and wait until it stops.
- ✓ Stop the machine immediately if it develops a problem.

POST-OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

- ✓ When finished, unplug the power cord.
- ✓ Clean work area and planer of sawdust.

REMEMBER: THE ONUS IS ON YOU TO WORK SAFELY