

# Safety and health alert

## 09/09 Masonry cutting grinder causes death

---

### Incident

In November 2008 a 39-year-old plumber died from injuries received while operating a 225mm cutting grinder (commonly known as a chasing saw).

The plumber was chasing brick walls in a bathroom of a single storey house under construction when the incident occurred.

### Factors to consider

- The cutting grinder was not equipped with the appropriate handle for masonry chasing work.
- The cutting grinder was being operated above shoulder height with reduced control due to incorrect handle chosen.
- Tripping hazard.

### Recommendations

1. Never use a saw on unstable loose surfaces or around trip hazards.
2. Operators need to be aware of the reactive forces (usually known as kickback) that may occur instantly and with great force, resulting in operators losing control.
3. Cutting above 1.7m or shoulder height should be done from a platform or scaffold.
4. Do not overreach.
5. Guarding should never be altered or removed.
6. Cut only as deeply as necessary.
7. Use the cutting grinder in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
8. Refer to the Concrete and Masonry Cutting and Drilling code of practice 2004.

### Further information

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au) or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email [safety@commerce.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@commerce.wa.gov.au)

Date: March 2009



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Commerce**

