

# A Note About Safety

## From the American Association of Woodturning

An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness. Respiratory and other problems can build over years.

Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Among the most important precautions are the use of face shields, safety glasses, and dust masks. Please follow and observe all manufacturers' safety guidelines.

Safety guidelines are published on [woodturner.org](http://woodturner.org). Following them will help you continue to enjoy woodturning. Any illustration or description of techniques and safety guidelines described in this publication cannot be relied upon to guarantee protection against personal injury.

Safety should be the first and most important consideration for any woodturner. Safety must not be just something to perform. It must be part of everything you do before, during, and after turning.

One item to note here is that the teacher constantly must be aware of any possible hazards in the room or shop where instruction is taking place. Are there pieces of wood or other items sticking out at eye level? A white cane would not help the blind turner with overhanging objects. Is there clutter on the floor? Are there glass jars sitting on the edge of a bench or shelf that could be easily knocked off and broken? If you think about it, most safety considerations are true for all turners, blind or not. Take a moment before a blind student arrives to ensure any possible hazards are removed. During the turning session, look around for possible hazards. When cleaning up, take a last look around for any other possible hazards.

One other safety and functional consideration is to put items back where you found them. A tool or other item put down a few inches from its original position may not be found by a blind person. The object may be an inch or a mile away, and the student will not see it or know where it has gone.

Awareness of finger placement while turning is vital for safety and success. While turning, hand placement on the turning wood is essential for making accurate cuts for blind turners. It is important to understand where the hands are at all times. The hands never should be placed on a rotating piece of wood that has not been turned to a cylinder. Once the rotating wood is a cylinder, make sure fingers are positioned a safe distance away from the toolrest when the wood is rotating toward you while you are turning. Also, be careful to avoid receiving a pinch between the wood and the toolrest at any point.

Many times the safety talk about work on the lathe centers around the tools and the accessories. Just as important is the clothing appropriate for turning. The subject of attire is not specific to a blind turner. It is important enough to remind all turners of some basic clothing considerations.

Starting at the top, if you have hair that is long and may get caught in the lathe, tie it back or wear a hat with the hair tucked into the hat. Protect your eyes and face. No matter if you are blind, make sure you are protecting your face with a shield and your eyes with impact-resistant eyewear. During normal turning, shavings will be flying at your body and face. In some cases, wood can launch into your face and body. Make sure your body is covered, especially your face and eyes.

For the shirt, make sure it is a close fit, keep it tucked into your pants, and make sure the sleeves do not extend past your elbows.

For pants or skirts, short or long, make sure they do not restrict your movement. Most of the movement during turning occurs with your legs. Make sure your pants or skirt fit well and allow for fluid movement.

The shoes should be closed-toed and made of a sturdy material with rubber or other non-slip soles. During turning, make sure your footing is solid without slipping. When wood or tools fall to the floor, your feet may be hit, so they should be covered with shoes at all times. Protect your feet and ensure solid footing throughout the work area.

## Disclaimer

Processes, procedures, and safety precautions described herein are general guidelines for the woodturner and challenged woodturner alike. All turners are solely responsible for their own safety and for the safety of others in their individual shops or at chapter meetings. The SFWTG, its officers, board members, committee members, staff, volunteers, vendors, and/or contract workers are hereby indemnified against any and all claims arising out of or as the result of any injury or loss sustained by woodturning or utilizing any of the processes, procedures, and/or safety precautions described herein.