

Pre-Use Inspection

Why every tool gets checked before use

We are hackers at heart. Equipment at the makerspace may have been **modified beyond its factory state**, adjusted by the last person who used it, or worn in ways that are not obvious. So the rule is:

Always assume the equipment has been altered, and inspect it thoroughly before you use it.

This applies every time, even on a tool you used yesterday and even if you are certified on it.

A quick general checklist

Tool SOP pages list specific checks. For any tool:

- **Guards and safety features** are in place and working (blade guards, keys, emergency stops).
- **Cords and plugs** are undamaged, and the tool is plugged in properly (see **Shop Safety: Electrical Safety and Lockout/Tagout**).
- **Blades, bits and consumables** are the right ones, sharp, undamaged and installed correctly, including direction of rotation.
- **Adjustments and locks** are where you expect. The last user's settings are not yours. Check fences, angles, depths and locks.
- **The work area is clear** of scraps, tools and debris, and nothing is touching the blade or bit before you start.
- **Dust collection or ventilation** is connected and on, where the tool needs it.
- **Out-of-service tags**. If a tool is tagged, do not use it.

If something is wrong

Do not use the tool. Take it out of service and report it. See **Shop Safety: Tagging a Tool Out of Service and Reporting It.**

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