Guidelines For Tool Use

I am happy to say that, for the most part, the tools are treated carefully and correctly in the woodwork classes. From time to time, however, tools are damaged and require replacement or repair. Sometimes tools are damaged simply because of a lack of care, but mostly I find that the damage was the result of incorrect use which in turn is caused by a lack of knowledge. Since it is my role to teach you how to use the tools correctly I must take responsibility for this.

1. Most of the tools are expensive and many are hand made. Please treat them carefully.

2. Do not use any tools marked with a **red dot** without first consulting with an instructor.

3. Do not allow tools to come into contact with one another, especially cutting tools like chisels, files, rasps and saws. If you have multiple tools on the bench, keep them in an ordered arrangement and place them into a tool stand. Don't put them on top of each other. For instance, the hard steel of a rasp or file will quickly damage a plane body or the precision ground edge of a try square.

4. Straight edges are made from aluminium and so are soft and easily damaged. Dings or burs on the edge will cause false readings. Please treat them gently and avoid contact with other metal objects.

5. Do your best to remember where tools belong so that you can return them to their correct place. If you are unsure, leave them on your bench.

6. If you are unsure how to use or adjust a tool such as a plane, **don't experiment**; ask an instructor instead.

7. Always rest **planes** on their side when not in use to prevent damage to the blade.

8. Please treat **try-squares and vernier callipers with extreme care**. They are fragile and will easily lose their accuracy if knocked or dropped. Don't place them down near the edge of a table. If dropped onto concrete (as in the machine room) they will almost certainly be ruined.

9. Take care when **using** planes to avoid bumping any other object, for example the vice or clamps. The body of the plane and the cutting edge are easily damaged. Any dings or burrs on the soul of the plane will mar the surface of your wood.

10. When using **chisels,** conserve the cutting edge by avoiding any twisting or levering motion.

11. When using a **cutting board**, keep your saw strokes within the sacrificial wooden strip.

12. Always place **safety glasses** back into their plastic bag when not in use. Never place them lens-down onto a surface. They are easily scratched.

13. At the end of the class please return tools to their correct place and tidy your work area.

14. A **burnisher** must only used on scraper blades. Anything harder such as a file or a hard chisel will cause damage. A scratched burnisher takes a long time to repair.

15. Most cutting tools are designed to cut in only one direction so it is important to lift the tool on the return stroke to avoid unnecessary wear on the cutting edge (especially files, rasps, saws and planes).

16. **Japanese hand saws** are more fragile than western style saws. They have very slender teeth and thin blades. They must not be used on very hard woods (for example, most eucalypts). They are designed to cut efficiently with little force. Applying heavy force to the saw will bend and break the teeth. They cut on the PULL stroke. No downward force should be applied on the push stroke.

17. Never use a **rip saw** to cut across the grain.

18. Do not attempt to sharpen any tools yourself.

19. Do not attempt to repair or modify any tools.

20. Do no strike a chisel with a mallet unless it has a ferule (metal ring at the top of the handle).

21. Only use a carpenters mallet or a nylon faced hammer to strike chisels.

22. Do not allow any tools or clamps to come into contact with adhesives. If this happens by accident please clean the tool thoroughly. Water based adhesives like PVA are corrosive.

23. Try squares and straight edges with blobs of dry glue on them are useless until cleaned.

24. Small (150mm) rulers regularly get lost because they are so small. Please return them to their correct place after use.