



Oxon
Woodturners

Risk Assessment and Mitigating Actions

A risk assessment is an exercise to identify all known risks from an activity. Each risk is then evaluated for a) likelihood of it happening and b) the impact if it did. From this comes a range of reasonable actions to prevent such incidents.

These assessments are required a) as good practice to promote safety, b) as they are required by various bodies should the Club, for example, sell items or demonstrate at external events and c) as in the event of an occurrence involving legal or insurance claim, the absence of an assessment may influence the outcome.

Note that the majority of identified risks are what can be considered as normal good practice in woodturning. However, you are **strongly recommended** to read the full risk assessment to make sure that you are indeed following these guidelines. This can be found on the Club website at <https://www.oxonwoodturners.com>

From these assessments we've extracted a short list of action points and procedures that will apply at all Club meetings and where the Club is represented at external events.

Demonstrations on Club nights or by Club members at external venues

1. Club members will wear full face/eye protection or safety prescription spectacles when operating a lathe. This equally applies to any member providing tuition.
2. Lathe operators may not have loose clothing, jewellery, hair which might become snagged in the equipment or wood.
3. A physical barrier must be in place in front of the lathe between lathe and audience. This is to prevent them from getting too close and to minimise the chance of them being injured as a result of a catch or the workpiece leaving the lathe. We will trial a number of these in the coming months.
4. Club equipment such as lathes, extension reels and over-lathe lamps must be PAT tested at the appropriate intervals.
5. Reduce the likelihood of fire by:
 - a) Use of solvents and polymerising oils to be discouraged.
 - b) Burning tools should not be used unless the demonstrator can provide an acceptable risk assessment.
 - c) Fire-fighting equipment and escape routes to be in place and clearly visible.
 - d) Grinding equipment to be kept as far away from wood shavings as possible,
6. Use of known toxic and/or sensitising wood species to be avoided and sanding minimised to reduce impact on the demonstrator and audience.

Hands-on nights and tuition

Same as *Demonstrations on Club nights or by Club members at external venues* above, plus

1. There is a significantly increased risk of catches and detached workpieces in hands-on and tuition situations making it especially important that everyone other than turners and mentors be kept at a safe distance, behind the physical barrier.
2. If it is necessary for audience members to approach (eg: to participate in turning or take a closer look), they should be permitted first by those operating the lathe so as to not cause surprise and so that appropriate action (e.g. stopping the lathe) may be taken prior to their engagement.
3. Moving and setting up the lathes should be carried out by two people to reduce the risk of injury.

Selling turnings at an external event from an Oxon Woodturners Club stall.

Note that this doesn't apply to turnings sold in non-OWC settings although following these guidelines would be good practice.

1. **Food safe.** Any object which might be used to contain food or drink must be made from a non-toxic wood species. Some, like Yew and Laburnum, are well known but the resource to check is the Wood Database <https://www.wood-database.com/wood-articles/wood-allergies-and-toxicity/>
2. **Food safe.** In addition to wood toxicity, turnings must also have a food safe finish. This would include platters, bowls, goblets, chopping boards, pepper and salt dispensers, utensils etc. That should also apply to pens, which are likely to be nibbled or sucked. Such finishes are typically raw oil, wax, shellac, cyanoacrylate adhesive or nitrocellulose lacquer. In addition, proprietary products marketed as 'food safe' such as Chestnut's Food Safe Finish, which is mineral oil.
3. **Non Food safe.** If the turning is ornamental and not intended for food use (such as a bowl, platter, goblet etc) and is non-food safe regarding species and/or finish then it should be labelled as not suitable for food use.
4. **Toy safe.** Any product intended as a toy should be of both a non-toxic wood species and a toy safe finish. Most of the food safe finishes are OK with the exception of non-curing oils such as cooking oils. To be entirely safe it is better to use a specialised product such as Chestnut's range of Acrylic lacquers, stains and certain waxes and oils certified to EN71-3.
5. **Toy safe.** If the toy or any loose components are small enough to fit in a child's mouth then they should be checked (the Club has a choke test sizing tool) and, if found to be a hazard, marked as not suitable for under 3 years old. They should also be placed on the display stand out of reach of young children.