



Flex-Shaft Safety Checklist

By Charles Lewton-Brain

- ✓ Always wear eye protection. Face shields are recommended over safety glasses for chip-forming work. A jeweler I know once wrote to me, "I have a scar on my cornea from a metal splinter that got past my safety glasses. Since I have gone exclusively to a face shield I have had no serious eye injury."
- ✓ Use hearing protection, particularly with high-pitched sounds.
- ✓ Always take the key out of the chuck after you use it—there have been some bad accidents when a tool was turned on with the chuck key in place. If using a Jacobs-type chuck, tighten the chuck on more than one of the holes.
- ✓ Always use accessories rated for speeds of 15,000 rpm or higher.
- ✓ Never wear dangling jewelry or any type of loose clothing that might become caught in the equipment. Keep your hair tied back.
- ✓ Do not place a tool that is too long or too heavy in the chuck; it could suddenly bend to a right angle and become a fearsome propeller. A student I know put a round needle file into the flex-shaft for use as a bur; it suddenly bent to a 90° angle and almost sliced off his nose as it knifed through the air.
- ✓ Brace the hand holding the workpiece against a bench pin. Better yet, clamp the piece securely.
- ✓ Check working heights and positions. To avoid strain, make sure you don't bend your wrist much when using the tool.
- ✓ Never use a drill or accessory that appears to be wobbling, out of round, vibrating, or not running true.