Thicknesser Safety Accreditation Notes

Accreditation notes # 5(a) Revised: June 2018

Note: Accreditation should be viewed as the start of a learning experience, not the end. Continue to learn as much as you can about setting up and using each item of equipment. By increasing your knowledge, you will reduce the chance of an accident and get better results. If you are unsure of any aspect of use, ask an experienced operator.

Safety

1. Hearing protection must be worn.
2. Do not wear gloves or loose clothing.
3. Long hair must be covered and not loose (tied up or hair net).
4. Do not stand directly behind the timber on the in-feed side and make sure that other members are not inline further back.
5. Keep hands clear of the cutting area unless the power is turned off and unplugged.
6. Get assistance with long lengths of timber.
7. Power cords on the floor pose a trip hazard and cords may be damaged. Hang cords safely overhead where possible or at least away from thoroughfares.
8. If in doubt ask an experienced operator.

Thicknesser Components

1. The internal components of the thicknesser are: kickback fingers, in-feed roller, chip breaker, cutter head and out-feed roller.

2. The external components of the thicknesser are: raise/lower handle, table locking knobs, on/off switch, suction hose connection, feed rate controller, depth of cut limiter and a thickness scale.

Before You Start

1. Check timber for metallic inclusions with metal detector - commercially bought timber may have remnants of metal staples
2. Thoroughly clean timber with a stiff brush if required
3. Check ends of timber for grit inclusions - preferably dock ends of re-cycled timber.
4. Do not stand planks on their ends on the floor as timber can pick up grit
5. Planks should have one face and possibly one edge made straight and true on a jointer before thicknessing to final dimension

Operation

1. Before operating ensure that the main dust extractor is turned on and the blast gate is open. For best results, the blast gates for the other machines not in use are closed. The switch for the extractor is on the wall near the corner of the lathe area. (note: you should ensure that the dust bins on the extractor are not full before you use any of the machines).
2. Timber should be positioned close at hand but ensure it is not a trip hazard.
3. Planks of timber to be thicknessed should be a minimum length of 300mm.

4. Avoid timber with loose knots. The minimum thickness that can be produced is 5.0 mm.
5. Before starting the thicknesser, determine the maximum depth of the timber that is to be processed. Be careful of boards that have a taper as they will jamb if allowance is not made for the taper. If the timber does jamb, lower the table immediately, turn off the machine and reset the cutting height.
6. The maximum cut that should be taken for one pass is 1 mm. Set the depth gauge to about 1 mm less than the maximum height of the timber. A 1 mm cut reduces the risk of major tear-out, is deep enough to remove indentations left by the drive roller, and does not place unnecessary stress on the thicknesser. With some hardwoods, a 0.5mm cut is sufficient to remove the drive roller indentations.
7. One half turn of the handle raises or lowers the cutter head by 1 mm. Use a rule rather than the thicknesser scale to determine the final dimension for your timber. The table can be locked in position. Only lock table on the final cut of multiple pieces of timber. To even out the wear on the cutter head, feed narrow pieces of wood to the sides of the in-feed opening.
8. The cutter head rotates towards you on the in-feed side. To minimise tear-out the timber grain should be rising towards you on the in-feed side. Essentially, the cutter head must plane with the grain, not against the grain.
9. Do not stand immediately behind the timber that is being fed into the thicknesser and ensure that no one else is in the same line. If the kickback fingers stick, a piece of wood can be ejected like a bullet with serious consequences.
10. Turn the machine off before you move away. Clean up the machine and the surrounding area when you are finished. Use the dust collector hose and a brush to remove all chips from the machine. As this may require reaching inside the cutting area, switch off and unplug the thicknesser first.
11. A characteristic of thicknessers is that approximately 50mm of 'snipe' can occur at both ends of the timber. Consider this potential waste when sizing your timber, especially if no further processing is intended. Subsequent thickness sanding will remove snipe. (Snipe is slight thinning of the timber in the above 50mm zone and is difficult to avoid.)
12. Feed narrow timber to alternate sides of the thicknesser to even out cutter wear. The tendency to feed everything in the centre increases wear there and can cause a problem when wide boards are thicknessed.

On line help

Read the Powermatic planer manual at: Planer manual

Get the most out of your planer: Using your planer

Problems

Poor surface finish may be due several things including: feeding the timber in against the grain, cranky grain, blunt blades or damaged blades.

Problems with the thicknesser should immediately be reported to the SHED BOSS, the SIG COORDINATOR or the appropriate ACCREDITATION TRAINER. A note should be made in the Shed Diary and describe the incident in the INCIDENT BOOK in the cabinet at the front door. A sign DO NOT USE should be placed on the thicknesser especially if further damage is likely to occur. If any unusual or sudden noise occurs, stop the thicknesser immediately and report as above.