

Walk behind concrete saws – Runaway saw blades

CAMs-469066

1. Relevant To

This alert is important for all Fulton Hogan employees and subcontractors who own, or use hired walk behind concrete floor saws. It may also be useful for operators of handheld concrete saws.

2. Critical Risk

Restricted Use Tools – Concrete saws

The uncontrolled escape of a fast-rotating saw blade has the potential to cause life changing injuries.



3. Background

Concrete saw blades have come free and shot like fast spinning missiles across roads, cycleways and footpaths on two occasions in recent years. The operators who reported these incidents are to be applauded. Their honesty has given us an opportunity to re-engineer the guarding and significantly reduce this risk before anyone gets hurt. Thank you.

Please continue to report all “high rated” close calls.

The following link provides useful background information in video form. Specifically:

- The basics of operating a handheld concrete saw
- An account of a very serious incident with a runaway floor saw blade

<https://fultonhoganknowhow.co.nz/concrete-saw/#tools-and-equipment>

4. Findings

Several contributing factors came to light during our investigations:

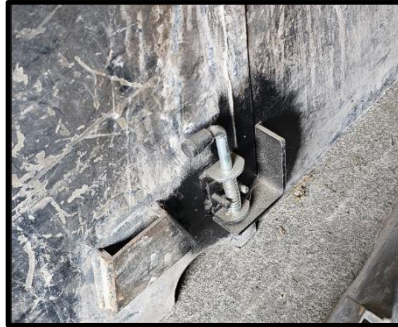
- 4.1 Blades can be incorrectly fitted or tightened.
- 4.2 It's possible for a mechanical failure to occur which allows the saw blade to release at speed.
- 4.3 Hinged guards can fly open if hit by the spinning blade. Then the blade can escape at extremely high revolutions and speeds. If someone were to be hit by a flying blade their injuries would be catastrophic.
- 4.4 A simple, effective engineering control can be fitted to walk behind concrete saws which prevents the hinge guard from lifting and the saw blade escaping.

Thanks to the Canterbury team for the work they've done to design this engineering improvement.

5. Mandatory Requirements

Regions and Projects are asked by 30 June 2025 to:

- 5.1 Go through this alert and the videos linked with all employees who use or are likely to use concrete saws.
- 5.2 Work with their engineering teams to install a spring-loaded pin lock (similar to the picture) to all hinge guards on walk behind concrete floor saws.
- 5.3 Share this alert with our subcontractors and hire companies. Ask them to confirm in writing that they will make these changes too.



These spring-loaded pin locks should automatically drop when the hinge guard is placed in its operating position and require pulling up and releasing for the hinge guard to be lifted.

6. Revision History

Date	Author	Brief Description of Change
21/03/2025	P. Westrupp	First draft
17/04/2025	T Talbot, J Curtis	Second draft

7. Closeout Requirements

Please discuss this Red Alert with your teams, complete the items below and return to your Safety Manager. They will collate all responses for the business unit and send a single confirmation to the HSQES Analyst at nzincident@fultonhogan.com before 1 July 2025.

7.1. What date was this Red Alert communicated to the workplace: ____/____/2025

7.2. Could this incident occur in your Region/Project? (Circle your answer below)

YES If Yes, please answer questions 7.3 & 7.4

NO If No, please answer question 7.5

7.3. Have all the actions and recommendations been implemented? (Circle your answer below)

YES If Yes, please answer question 7.4

NO If No, please answer question 7.5

7.4. Are these measures sufficient to eliminate or reduce the risk of an incident (or similar) described in the alert from happening again? (Circle your answer below)

YES or NO

If No, please raise a CAM's case listing the required actions and accountabilities to be taken in order to eliminate or reduce the risk. Record the CAM's number below:

CAMs Case Number: CAMs-_____

7.5. Please explain why this incident could not occur within your region / project.

In signing this document, I confirm that the actions above have been completed in this region/project.

Region / Project: _____

Region / Project Manager Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____