

NJ School of Woodwork

Student Participant Policy

Safety, Requisite Abilities, Attendance, Participation, and Course Completion

Effective Date: ____ 1/01/2026 ____

Policy Owner: NJ School of Woodwork (“NJSOW”)

Applies To: All students, participants, instructors, teaching assistants, volunteers, and other individuals participating in NJSOW instructional programs.

1. Purpose and Scope

The NJ School of Woodwork is committed to providing a rigorous, inclusive, and safe learning environment in which students can develop woodworking skills through instruction, supervised practice, hands-on projects, and responsible use of woodworking tools and machinery.

Woodworking instruction necessarily involves sharp tools, rotating machinery, electrical equipment, wood and wood products, dust, adhesives, finishes, and other hazards. OSHA identifies woodworking machinery as presenting hazards including lacerations, amputations, flying material, and other serious injuries, and emphasizes machine guarding, appropriate training, safe work practices, and proper personal protective equipment.

This policy establishes the minimum standards for student participation. Individual courses may impose additional requirements based upon the tools, machinery, materials, projects, duration, and level of instruction involved.

2. Student Responsibility

Enrollment in an NJSOW course constitutes an agreement to:

- Follow all instructor and staff directions concerning safety and shop operations.
- Complete required safety instruction before operating any tool or machine.
- Use tools, machinery, materials, personal protective equipment, and facilities only for their intended purposes and only as authorized.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that does not endanger themselves or others.
- Attend and actively participate in the required instructional sessions.
- Ask questions whenever a procedure, tool, machine, or safety requirement is unclear.
- Immediately report unsafe conditions, damaged equipment, injuries, or other safety concerns to an instructor or staff member.
- Respect classmates, instructors, staff, facilities, tools, machinery, and other students' work.

- Complete assigned work and demonstrate the required competencies for course completion.
- Accept that an instructor may restrict or suspend a student's access to a particular tool, machine, material, or activity whenever the instructor determines that the student has not demonstrated safe operation.

Safety requirements take precedence over production schedules, project completion, convenience, or individual student preferences.

3. Safety Requirements

3.1 Safety Orientation

Students must complete the safety orientation required for their course before independently operating applicable tools or machinery.

Safety instruction may include:

- General shop rules and emergency procedures.
- Location and proper use of emergency stops.
- Machine-specific hazards and operating procedures.
- Personal protective equipment.
- Proper tool selection and setup.
- Guarding and safety devices.
- Material handling.
- Dust collection and shop housekeeping.
- Safe use of hand tools and power tools.
- Finishing materials, adhesives, solvents, and other chemicals where applicable.
- Fire prevention and emergency response.
- Injury reporting procedures.

Completion of an orientation does not constitute authorization to operate every machine in the shop. Machine operation is subject to course requirements and instructor authorization.

OSHA specifically recommends that woodworking equipment be operated only by trained and authorized individuals who understand the machine's hazards, controls, safeguards, emergency stopping procedures, and required operating practices.

3.2 Machine Authorization

Students may operate only machines on which they have received applicable instruction and authorization.

The instructor may require a student to demonstrate competency before permitting independent operation. Demonstration may include the student's ability to:

- Identify the machine and its principal hazards.
- Inspect the machine before use.
- Identify and use required guards and safety devices.
- Select appropriate blades, cutters, bits, jigs, fixtures, and other accessories.
- Properly position and secure material.
- Maintain appropriate hand and body position.
- Perform the operation using the prescribed procedure.
- Stop the machine safely.
- Respond appropriately to an emergency or abnormal condition.
- Leave the machine in a safe condition after use.

No student may bypass, disable, remove, defeat, or modify a machine guard, interlock, emergency stop, dust-collection system, or other safety device without explicit authorization from NJSOW staff for an approved maintenance or instructional purpose.

OSHA advises that guards remain functional and that workers not be permitted to operate woodworking equipment when required guards or safety devices are not functioning properly.

3.3 Personal Protective Equipment

Students must wear the personal protective equipment required for the activity and identified by NJSOW.

Depending upon the operation, this may include:

- Approved eye protection.
- Hearing protection.
- Respiratory protection where specifically required and permitted by NJSOW procedures.
- Appropriate footwear.
- Appropriate clothing.
- Other task-specific protective equipment.

Students are responsible for arriving prepared to comply with course-specific PPE requirements.

3.4 Clothing, Hair, Jewelry, and Personal Items

Students must wear clothing suitable for a working woodshop.

Loose clothing, dangling jewelry, unsecured long hair, scarves, cords, or other items that could become caught in machinery are prohibited around operating equipment.

Closed-toe footwear with adequate traction is required in the shop. Sandals, flip-flops, slippers, or other footwear that does not adequately protect the feet are not permitted.

Students must secure backpacks, coats, bags, phones, and other personal items so that they do not create trip, obstruction, or equipment hazards.

3.5 Housekeeping and Material Handling

Students must maintain an orderly work area throughout each session.

Students are expected to:

- Keep aisles, exits, and machine access areas clear.
- Promptly remove scrap and waste.
- Return tools to designated locations.
- Keep workbenches and machines reasonably clean.
- Use dust collection systems as instructed.
- Report spills and unsafe conditions immediately.
- Store lumber and materials safely.
- Never place hands, tools, or other objects in hazardous machine areas while equipment is operating or coasting.

Proper housekeeping is a safety requirement, not simply a matter of shop appearance. OSHA notes that debris, dust, and obstructions can contribute to falls and other woodworking injuries.

3.6 Prohibited Conduct

The following are prohibited:

- Horseplay, running, fighting, practical jokes, or intentional distraction.
- Operating equipment without authorization.
- Operating machinery while impaired by alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or any medication or condition that materially impairs safe operation.
- Distracting another person who is operating machinery.
- Using tools or machinery contrary to instructor directions.
- Deliberately defeating or circumventing safety devices.
- Unauthorized alterations, repairs, adjustments, or maintenance.
- Unauthorized use of another student's tools, materials, or projects.
- Use of a cell phone or other electronic device in a manner that distracts from safe work.
- Bringing weapons or other prohibited items into the shop.

Any conduct presenting an immediate safety risk may result in immediate removal from the shop.

4. Requisite Abilities and Safe Participation

4.1 General Standard

NJSOW courses are hands-on learning environments. Students must be able to participate safely in the essential activities of the course, either independently or with reasonable accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the course or create an undue safety burden.

A student's ability to safely perform the essential functions of a particular course will be evaluated based upon the actual activities and hazards of that course, rather than generalized assumptions about disability or physical characteristics.

Federal ADA regulations recognize that covered private entities offering courses may need to make reasonable modifications to course practices and may provide auxiliary aids and services, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the course or create an undue burden. New Jersey's Law Against Discrimination likewise protects individuals with disabilities and requires reasonable accommodations in covered public accommodations, subject to applicable limitations such as undue burden.

4.2 Essential Participation Abilities

Depending upon the course, students may need to demonstrate the ability to:

- Understand and follow verbal and/or written safety instructions.
- Communicate with instructors and classmates sufficiently to work safely.
- Remain attentive during demonstrations and machine operation.
- Recognize safety warnings, machine status, and hazardous conditions.
- Exercise adequate judgment and decision-making for the assigned task.
- Maintain appropriate positioning and control while using tools or machines.
- Safely manipulate workpieces, tools, fixtures, and controls required for the course.
- Stop work when instructed or when an unsafe condition develops.
- Maintain sufficient awareness of surrounding people and equipment.
- Work for the duration required by the course while taking appropriate breaks as permitted.
- Complete required cleanup and shutdown procedures.

These requirements describe **essential course safety functions**, not a demand that every student have identical physical, sensory, or learning abilities.

4.3 Accommodations

NJSOW encourages students who may require an accommodation to contact the School before the course begins so that the School can discuss reasonable modifications or auxiliary aids.

An accommodation will not permit a student to perform an operation that NJSOW reasonably determines cannot be performed safely under the circumstances, and an accommodation will not authorize bypassing a required safety control.

NJSOW will evaluate accommodation requests individually and in good faith. The School may consider whether a proposed accommodation is effective, reasonable, compatible with the educational objectives of the course, and consistent with safe operation of the shop.

5. Instructor Authority and Safety Intervention

Instructors and authorized staff have the responsibility and authority to stop any activity that they reasonably believe presents a safety risk.

An instructor may:

- Stop a student's work.
- Require retraining or reassessment.
- Require additional supervision.
- Restrict access to a particular machine or tool.
- Require use of a different process.
- Remove a student from a machine or activity.
- Suspend a student's shop privileges.
- Remove a student from the session.
- Recommend withdrawal or dismissal from a course when safety requirements cannot be met.

A student's disagreement with an instructor's safety determination does not authorize the student to continue the activity.

Students are encouraged to ask questions and request clarification when they believe a procedure could be performed more safely.

6. Attendance and Punctuality

6.1 Attendance Requirement

Because NJSOW courses involve sequential demonstrations, supervised hands-on training, machine authorization, and practical skill development, attendance at required instructional sessions is an essential component of the course.

Students are expected to attend **100% of the scheduled instructional hours**, unless the School expressly approves an exception.

A student who misses instructional time is responsible for contacting the School promptly and determining whether the missed material can be made up.

6.2 Tardiness and Early Departure

Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the full scheduled session.

Repeated tardiness or early departure may result in insufficient instructional hours to meet course requirements, even where the student has completed assigned projects.

An instructor may determine that a student arriving substantially late cannot safely participate in a portion of the session because the student missed prerequisite demonstrations or safety information.

6.3 Absences

A student who cannot attend must notify NJSOW as soon as reasonably possible.

An absence does not automatically entitle a student to a make-up session.

Because shop capacity, instructor availability, machine access, materials, and course sequencing may limit opportunities for make-up instruction, NJSOW will determine, in its discretion, whether and how missed work can be completed.

Possible remedies may include:

- Attendance at an approved make-up session.
- Additional supervised instruction.
- Completion of equivalent assignments.
- A different project or exercise.
- Extension of the completion date where feasible.
- Withdrawal and re-enrollment in a future course.

6.4 Extended or Excessive Absence

When missed time prevents a student from receiving required instruction or demonstrating required competencies, NJSOW may determine that the student has not completed the course.

Where practical, the School may recommend re-enrollment rather than attempting to compress missed instruction into an unsafe or inadequate make-up experience.

7. Course Completion Requirements

Attendance alone does not guarantee completion.

To successfully complete a course, a student must satisfy **all applicable course requirements**, which may include:

- Required attendance hours.
- Required safety training.
- Successful demonstration of required tool and machine competencies.
- Completion of assigned projects or exercises.
- Demonstration of safe work practices.
- Proper use of PPE and safety equipment.
- Completion of required shop cleanup and shutdown procedures.
- Satisfactory participation in instructional activities.
- Any written, practical, or other assessments specified by the course.
- Payment or administrative requirements applicable to the course, where separately established.

An unfinished project may prevent course completion when completion of that project is an essential learning objective.

Conversely, a student who completes a project but fails to demonstrate required safety competencies may not be certified as having completed the course.

8. Competency-Based Machine Authorization

NJSOW may use competency demonstrations rather than time alone to determine whether a student is qualified to operate particular equipment.

A student who does not demonstrate competency may be required to receive additional instruction and repeat the assessment.

Competency may be reassessed at any time when:

- A student has been absent for an extended period.
- The student demonstrates unsafe practices.
- The machine, process, or project changes materially.
- The instructor determines that reassessment is appropriate.
- A significant safety incident or near miss occurs.

Prior experience, professional credentials, or prior operation of similar machinery elsewhere does not automatically establish authorization to operate NJSOW equipment.

9. Injuries and Incidents

Students must immediately report:

- Any injury, however minor.
- Any exposure to a chemical or hazardous material.
- Equipment malfunction.
- Broken or damaged tooling.
- Guard or safety-device failure.
- Property damage.
- Near misses.
- Unsafe conditions.
- Any incident that could reasonably have resulted in injury.

Students must not attempt unauthorized repairs or corrective actions.

NJSOW may investigate incidents and may temporarily restrict equipment use while the School determines whether additional training, maintenance, or corrective action is necessary.

10. Drugs, Alcohol, and Impairment

No student may participate in hands-on shop activities while impaired.

Students must not possess, consume, or use alcohol or illegal drugs on NJSOW premises or during NJSOW instructional activities.

A student who appears unable to operate equipment safely may be removed from hands-on activities and may be directed to leave the premises.

Where a legitimate medication or other condition may affect safe participation, the student is encouraged to communicate with NJSOW regarding appropriate accommodations or alternative participation arrangements. Students should not be required to disclose unnecessary medical information.

11. Respectful Learning Environment

NJSOW is committed to a learning environment in which students are treated with dignity and respect.

Harassment, intimidation, discriminatory conduct, threats, bullying, or retaliation are prohibited.

NJSOW will administer this policy consistent with applicable federal and New Jersey requirements concerning nondiscrimination and reasonable accommodation. New Jersey's Division on Civil Rights identifies disability among the characteristics protected by the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and explains that the LAD applies to covered places of public accommodation, including schools and educational institutions.

Safety standards will be applied based on legitimate course and safety requirements and will not be used as a pretext for discrimination.

12. Removal, Suspension, or Dismissal

NJSOW may immediately remove a student from an instructional activity when the student's conduct creates an imminent or significant safety risk.

Depending on the circumstances, further action may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Mandatory retraining.
- Temporary restriction from equipment.
- Suspension from shop activities.
- Removal from a course.
- Dismissal from the School or program.

Serious violations may result in immediate dismissal without progressive discipline.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Deliberate disabling of safety equipment.
- Operating machinery without authorization.
- Threatening or violent conduct.
- Intentionally placing another person at risk.
- Operating machinery while impaired.
- Repeated refusal to follow safety instructions.
- Theft or intentional destruction of property.
- Serious harassment or misconduct.

Nothing in this section prevents NJSOW from considering relevant circumstances or reasonable accommodations when required by applicable law.

13. Student Appeals and Review

A student who believes that an academic, safety, attendance, accommodation, or disciplinary decision was made in error may request review by the School's designated administrator.

The request should identify:

- The decision being challenged.
- The relevant facts.

- Any information the student believes was not considered.
- The resolution being requested.

A request for review does not permit a student to continue a prohibited or unsafe activity while the matter is under review.

The School's primary consideration in safety matters will be protection of students, staff, visitors, and property.

14. Course-Specific Requirements

This policy establishes minimum School-wide expectations. Individual courses may establish stricter or additional requirements based upon:

- Student age or experience level.
- Type and complexity of machinery.
- Project requirements.
- Hazardous materials or finishes.
- Required PPE.
- Class size.
- Instructor-to-student ratio.
- Facility limitations.
- Duration and sequencing of instruction.

Where a course-specific requirement conflicts with a general provision of this policy, the more protective safety requirement will apply.