

# Gouge Safety

## Woodturning Safety Rules

- Wear a full-face shield at all times for protection.
- Make sure the tool is on the tool rest before starting a cut.
- Always keep tool support as close to the work as possible.
- Make sure the lathe is set at a safe speed before starting the lathe.
- Always sharpen a new tool prior to use to ensure it performs properly.

**WARNING:** Failure to follow these basic rules can result in serious injury or death.

## Guidelines for Using Gouges

Today's gouges feature long shafts and extended flutes for longer wear. However, this does not mean these gouges are designed to reach a significant distance beyond the tool rest! Reaching too far beyond the tool rest results in vibration, increases the likelihood of a serious "catch" and in some cases may result in the tool shaft or handle breaking causing serious injury. The chart below lists gouge sizes and the recommended distance that a gouge can safely reach beyond the tool rest. Not working within these recommended distances can result in serious injury or death.

### Max Reach

"Max. Reach" indicates the maximum distance that the tool can safely reach beyond the tool rest.

### BOWL GOUGES:

| Gouge | Shaft Dia.     | Max. Reach |
|-------|----------------|------------|
| 1/4"  | 3/8"           | 1 1/2"     |
| 3/8"  | 1/2"           | 2 1/2"     |
| 1/2"  | 5/8"           | 3 1/2"     |
| 5/8"  | 3/4" or larger | 4"         |

### SPINDLE/DETAIL GOUGES:

| Gouge | Shaft Dia. | Max. Reach |
|-------|------------|------------|
| 1/4"  | 1/4"       | 3/4"       |
| 3/8"  | 3/8"       | 1"         |
| 1/2"  | 1/2"       | 1 3/4"     |
| 9/16" | 9/16"      | 1 3/4"     |

### ROUGHING GOUGES:

| Gouge Size       | Max. Reach |
|------------------|------------|
| 3/4"             | 1 3/4"     |
| 1 1/4" or larger | 1 3/4"     |

Roughing Gouges are for spindle use only, NEVER use for bowl turning as the tool may break resulting in serious injury!

## Handle Size

Tool handle length should be at least 5 times the maximum distance you intend to reach beyond the tool rest in order to provide the needed leverage for proper tool control. Example: For a maximum reach of 3" over the tool rest; your handle must be a minimum of 15" in length.