Preventing Cut-Off Saw Kickback

Saw blades build up huge amounts of kinetic energy during cutting; and when they stop suddenly, the energy must go somewhere, leaving the operator with a potentially fatal injury from a saw blade or a saw that is wrenched from its fittings and is left running freely along the ground.

Kickback is a sudden reaction to a pinched, jammed, or bound up saw blade where the saw thrusts up and backward.

Another violent pressure that leaves the operator with uncontrolled equipment is the pull-in force, which may drag the operator toward the blade.

There are two main ways to reduce saw kickback: prevent the blade from stopping suddenly and reduce your chances of being struck if the saw does stop.

◆ Make sure you are trained in proper cutting techniques, safety, and how to hold the saw.
◆ Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment while cutting.
◆ Keep your blade sharp and clean. Dull or dirty blades tend to bind up in cuts.
◆ Do not use a saw that is too heavy for you to control.
◆ Never remove the guard as it is designed to capture and deflect the pieces of a shattered blade. Inspect the guard and make sure that there is no evidence of failure.
◆ Make a series of straight, shallow cuts. Set the blade at no greater than 1/8” to 1/4” more than the thickness of the material to avoid contacting foreign items while cutting.
◆ Operate the saw at the manufacturer's recommended speed.
◆ Make sure your blade is the right size for the saw.
◆ Take your finger off the trigger or power switch if the blade binds up, the saw stalls, or the power is interrupted.

Stay out of the line of fire! Standing directly behind the saw increases your chances of being struck by the blade if the saw kicks back. Maintain your balance and footing at all times.