



Winter Park-based company looks to reduce number of injuries for woodworkers

More than 50,000 people suffer table saw injuries per year



WINTER PARK, Fla. - It's a light-weight product with a handle at the top that could potentially help carpenters avoid an injury that could send them to the emergency room.

The device was developed by MICROJIG, a Winter Park company focused on the safety of people who work with wood.

"It controls your wood as you're making a cut from three directions. There's no other push block that does that," Morgan Hopfensperger, a member of the team at MICROJIG, said. "It keeps your workpiece down on the table, keeps it against the fence and it keeps everything parallel to the blade. This is different in that it's designed to be able to control the piece the whole way through the cut"

The product essentially keeps the wood piece in place so the woodworker can avoid a nasty cut to the hand. MICROJIG says that every year, more than 50,000 people are treated for table saw injuries.

"That comes to one injury every nine minutes, so there's a huge need for better practices on the table saw," Hopfensperger said.

The company is not only aiming to reduce the number of injuries with this American-built product but also hoping it will bring back the craft of carpentry to public schools.

"Those programs are going away and we think it may have something to do with the fact that teaching students can be dangerous," Hopfensperger said.

The company also hopes to donate the GRR-RIPPER push block to schools around the country. All the school needs to do is apply for it.

"The schools will receive two GRR-RIPPERS per table saw." Hopfensperger said.

Typically, a push stick is used when cutting a piece of wood but there's a flaw with that method.

"This doesn't give you a whole lot of control. It creates a pivot point at the back of the work piece," Hopfensperger said.

The piece of wood could end up flying off the table and impacting the person, which could potentially cause broken ribs.

So far, 150 schools have applied for the push block GRR-RIPPER. One of them is Lyman High School in Longwood.

Schools interested in applying to receive GRR-RIPPERS for their students can visit www.MICROJIG.com.