

Clean Machine

Bandsaw dust control that works

As the tendrils of creeping decrepitude drape ever more tightly about you, making dust in the shop becomes less and less of a thrill. Your lungs just aren't manly enough any more to digest a big load of trash every day, and the romance of covering every surface in the shop with a thick layer of dust has long since faded away. More and more tools, both hand and stationary, are now designed with dust collection in mind, but one great favorite has long remained a source of discontent.



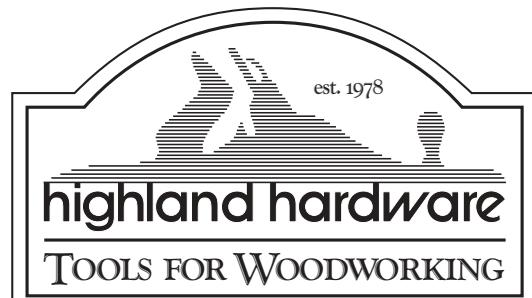
Dust control on the bandsaw, you might, think, should be a straightforward proposition. Almost all the waste is driven straight down through the table into the lower half of the saw housing, with very little urge or opportunity to get away. However, it's no secret that the pitiful little plastic dust ports mounted beneath the table on Delta and Jet 14" bandsaws are next to worthless. It's simply not reasonable to expect sufficient draft through such tiny ports to divert much of the dust stream flying by at 45 miles per hour—half of which is hidden behind the blade anyway. Delta has introduced a couple of replacement dust hoods with much larger ports, and their latest attempt works fairly well. A significant amount of dust still gets past, however, flying on down to coat the lower wheel and get blown into the air as the blade rises from the left side of the housing.

Though it took a few years to screw up my courage to the sticking point, I finally took a deep breath and did what needed to be done. Since almost all of the dust blasts straight toward the bottom of the housing, I decided that was the right place for capture. So I took the lower door off the saw and jigsawed a 4" hole in it, bottom center, just above the molded bead that stiffens the structure. I filed and sanded the edges clean and safe, then trimmed a '6" Universal Dust Hood' [#192628 in our catalog] to fit. I attached it with truss head screws and serrated flange nuts. An adjustable metal elbow attached to the hood brings the dust collector hose in from the left. Nothing protrudes as far as the front edge of the saw table, so there's no collision hazard for any valuables in the area.



The results are outstanding. There's *no* airborne dust, even when I'm resawing 10" material. The lower tire always has a little dust on it, but there's no build-up; it has ceased to be a concern. A little dust bounces off the surface of the wood, and some escapes through the open kerf; there's always a sprinkling on the stand after a sawing session, but at a guess the system collects better than 99% of the waste before it can become a nuisance.

Please note that whacking a 4" hole in your bandsaw door might conceivably lead a manufacturer to quibble about warranty issues. Check with the maker of your saw before you perform the operation, or simply wait until the warranty period has expired. For safety, use serrated flange nuts inside the door to secure the dust hood; they're the same reliable, self-locking hardware Delta itself uses inside the housing.



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