

SAWMILL FORUM

CASEY
CREAMER

SAW
DOCTOR



I will be bringing my saw out to you to get worked on. I noticed a big orange sticker on the crate that says “do not lay flat.” It is a long drive from Vermont to your shop. Do I have to stand the saw up in my pickup truck?

No. It won't hurt your saw to lay flat in the back of a pickup truck. But there is a legitimate reason that some of the saw manufacturers put that sticker on their crate when the saw is new.

At one time or another almost all saws will get to take a trip being shipped via common carrier on a tractor trailer filled with other miscellaneous freight. Fortunately, saw crates are traditionally round so that instead of having to have a forklift to move it you can always just roll it anywhere you want it to go.

Once it is loaded into a trailer, it is natural for the driver to want to lay it down flat so that it won't get in the mood to roll on its own during transit. Sounds innocent enough. But the problem is that the saw just took up about 60" of space that is only a few inches high. What better place to start stacking other heavier freight on top of? And since much of that freight is heavy and palletized, they just use a forklift to drop another pallet of freight right on top of that brand new saw. And then when it is time to remove some of those pieces, what is the chance that an errant fork will scratch or gouge the body of the saw?

Much worse, there is a slight chance that the saw that is laying flat will even get run over by one of the forklift tires. That's not going to do it a lot of good when you take the finished saw out of the crate and expect it to run properly on your mill.

It took many, many years for the saw manufacturers to become aware of this problem and figure out a workable solution.

So they just put that bright orange sticker on the crate that reads “do not lay flat.” Now the trucking companies are somewhat obliged to load the saw so that it is standing up against the side of the trailer.--although some seem intent on ignoring that sticker. The better ones will then strap it against

the side of the trailer, but some will use a load bar that puts pressure against the crate to pin it to the wall of the trailer. That works okay when the load bar is positioned properly against the wooden crate, but I have also seen occasions when the load bar is directly contacting the body of the saw. That's not the right way to get the job done.

All saw manufacturers want their new saws to perform properly for their customers. There are a lot of ways to create a situation where the saw won't perform properly. There can be a problem with mis-manufactured teeth on a new saw, or improper socket geometry, or just a substandard job of hammering the saw. Not to mention all of the problems you could have at your mill that would cause problems to a properly put up saw.

By putting that sticker on the crate, the manufacturer is simply trying to eliminate one more reason for a saw to not run properly for you.

It sounds like a worthy goal to me. As for transporting it in your pickup truck, it won't hurt anything to lay it flat as long as you are not also trying to stack heavy stuff on top of it with a forklift. And I know you would never dream of doing that to your own saw.

But don't let that stop you from stacking other saws in their crates on top. Carrying a stack of three or four saws stacked flat in your pickup truck won't hurt anything assuming they are each in their own crate and the crates are in acceptable condition meaning they still support the saw rather than the saw being what is supporting the crate.

And please don't ever put more than one saw in the same crate. The crates were never intended to support any more weight than what one saw weighs. And I can tell you from having to handle a few of them in my time, when you put two saws in one crate, it seems that it weighs at least three times what one saw in the crate weighed. They are dangerous to handle that way, especially since the crate was never engineered to take that much weight.



Four small words can make a big difference.

I get saws shipped to me from all over the country and the other day I heard an interesting remark from one of the regular truck drivers. He mentioned that wherever he goes to load or unload freight, these saws always draw a lot of attention. He says that everyone who sees them always seems fascinated as to how big they are, and they always want to know what they are used for and where they are going. Of course most of the folks think they are being sent to me to be sharpened, but that is a common misconception.

When you tell someone that you repair saws all they can think of is sharpening because what else could anyone possibly do to a saw blade? Needless to say, telling someone you are a saw smith or a saw doctor always draws inquisitive expressions. Of course in the medical world doctors and nurses are always asking what you do for a living and telling them I am a saw doctor always throws them for a loop. But they try their hardest not to show it.

Questions about sawmills and their operation should be sent to Forum, The Northern Logger, P.O. Box 69, Old Forge, NY 13420, FAX #315-369-3736.

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