CUTTING EDGE SAWMILL

SAWMILL SETUP CHECKLIST

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A quick pre-start reference for a smoother, safer milling day.

BEFORE YOU START THE MILL
Use this checklist as a practical reminder. Always follow your sawmill manufacturer's manual, site rules, and required safety procedures.

SITE & WORK AREA

- [ ] **LEVEL, STABLE AREA**
  Set up on firm ground and make sure the mill bed or track is level and supported.
- [ ] **CLEAR THE WORK ZONE**
  Remove trip hazards, loose tools, scrap, and unnecessary material around the mill.
- [ ] **PLAN LOG & LUMBER FLOW**
  Make sure there is room to load logs, remove slabs, stack boards, and move safely.
- [ ] **CHECK OVERHEAD & SIDE CLEARANCE**
  Confirm enough clearance for the mill head, loader, logs, and equipment.
- [ ] **KEEP PEOPLE CLEAR**
  Establish a safe work zone and keep bystanders, children, and pets away from operating equipment.

MILL & BLADE CHECK

- [ ] **INSPECT THE BLADE**
  Check for cracks, damaged teeth, rust, heavy buildup, or other visible damage.
- [ ] **VERIFY BLADE TENSION**
  Set tension according to the mill and blade manufacturer's instructions.
- [ ] **CHECK BLADE TRACKING**
  Make sure the blade is riding correctly on the wheels before cutting.
- [ ] **CHECK GUIDE ROLLERS / BEARINGS**
  Inspect condition, clearance, alignment, and freedom of movement.
- [ ] **CHECK BELTS, GUARDS & COVERS**
  Confirm guards are in place and belts, pulleys, and covers are serviceable.
- [ ] **REMOVE LOOSE TOOLS**
  Do not leave wrenches, gauges, or adjustment tools on the mill.

QUICK REMINDER: If the blade is dull, damaged, or not tracking correctly, fix the problem before loading a log.

FINAL PRE-START CHECK

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LOG PREP & SECURING

- [ ] **INSPECT THE LOG**
  Look for embedded metal, wire, rocks, dirt, and other material that can damage a blade.
- [ ] **CLEAN EXCESS DIRT**
  Remove mud and grit from the cutting path whenever possible.
- [ ] **POSITION THE LOG SECURELY**
  Make sure the log is seated properly against stops and supports.
- [ ] **ENGAGE CLAMPS / DOGS**
  Secure the log so it cannot roll, shift, or lift during the cut.
- [ ] **CHECK THE CUT PATH**
  Confirm clamps, stops, supports, and hardware are clear of the blade path.

POWER, CONTROLS & PERSONAL SAFETY

- [ ] **CHECK FUEL / POWER SOURCE**
  Confirm adequate fuel, battery charge, hydraulic fluid, or electrical supply as applicable.
- [ ] **TEST CONTROLS**
  Make sure throttle, feed, head controls, emergency stop, and other controls operate correctly.
- [ ] **WEAR REQUIRED PPE**
  Use eye and hearing protection and any additional PPE required by your mill manufacturer.
- [ ] **SECURE CLOTHING & HAIR**
  Keep loose clothing, jewelry, gloves, and long hair away from moving parts.
- [ ] **PLAN YOUR POSITION**
  Stand where you can operate controls safely and stay clear of the blade, log, and moving mill head.

BEFORE THE FIRST CUT

- [ ] **START AND LISTEN**
  Run the mill briefly and listen for unusual vibration, rubbing, squealing, or abnormal sounds.
- [ ] **VERIFY TRACKING AGAIN**
  Confirm the blade stays in the correct position at operating speed.
- [ ] **CONFIRM CUT HEIGHT**
  Double-check your first-board thickness or opening cut before feeding into the log.
- [ ] **USE A STEADY FEED RATE**
  Do not force the blade. Let blade condition, species, diameter, and horsepower guide feed speed.
- [ ] **STOP IF SOMETHING CHANGES**
  If the cut becomes wavy, rough, hot, noisy, or unstable, stop and inspect before continuing.

STOP AND CHECK BEFORE CONTINUING

Do not continue milling if you notice a cracked blade, damaged weld, loose guard, unstable log, unusual vibration, control problem, or any condition that could make operation unsafe.

KEEP IT SHARP. KEEP IT CUTTING.

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Professional sawmill blade sharpening & setting