

8. Sheet Metal Shear





A shear is a tool used to cut straight edges into sheet metal stock.

Before we discuss the safe operating procedures of the shear, there are a few safety guidelines that will apply when working in any sheet metal area...



Sheet metal tools exert powerful force to bend and cut material, and present severe dangers of crushing and severing extremities. Pay attention to all posted warnings and keep hands away from the working area.



Always wear safety glasses! Working with sheet metal is no different than working with any other material in the machine shop when it comes to eye safety.



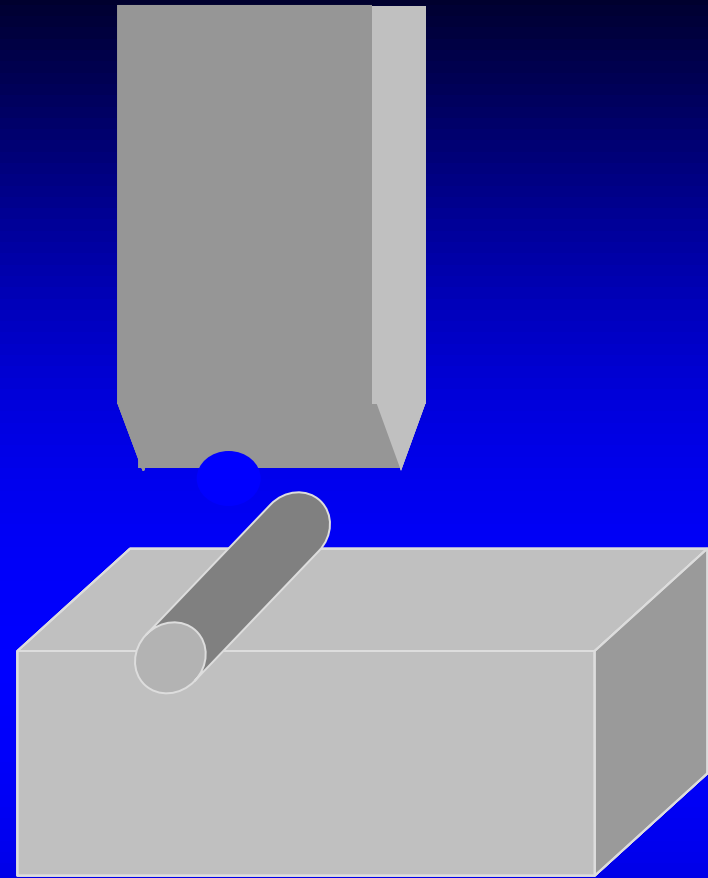
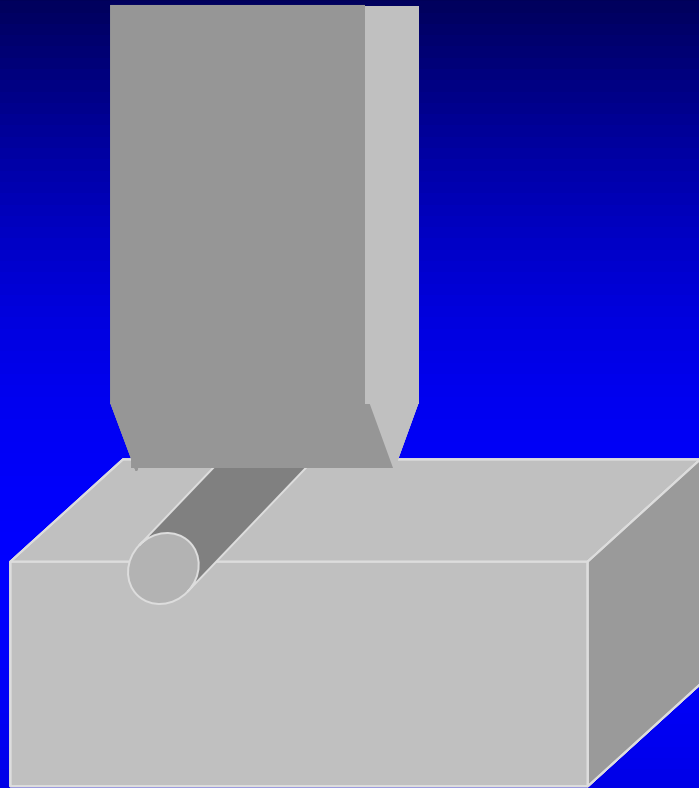
Contrary to the other tools in the machine shop, sheet metal tools do require the use of gloves, as the sheet stock can often have very sharp edges.



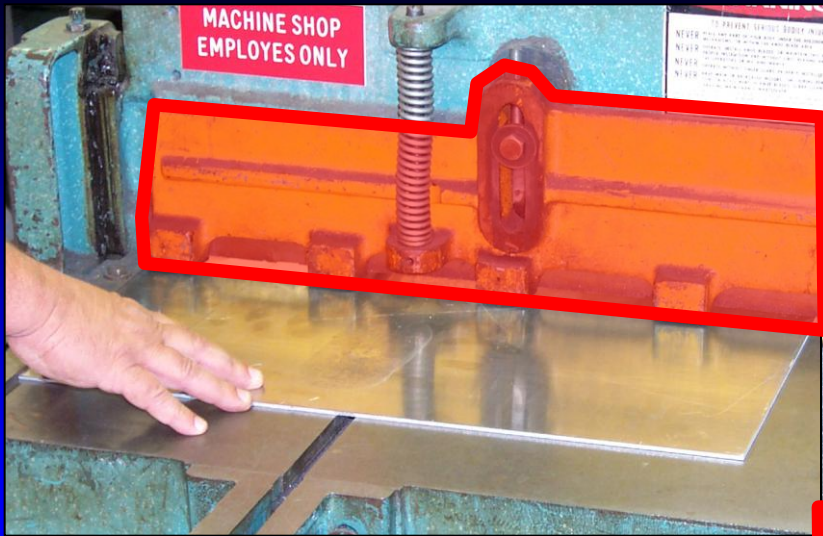
Before cutting sheet metal with a shear, ensure that it is rated to cut the gauge of sheet metal you're working with. The gauge rating is generally marked on the machine.



Remember that the shear is for sheet metal only. They are not built to cut round stock, and present serious hazards if anything other than sheet metal is used.



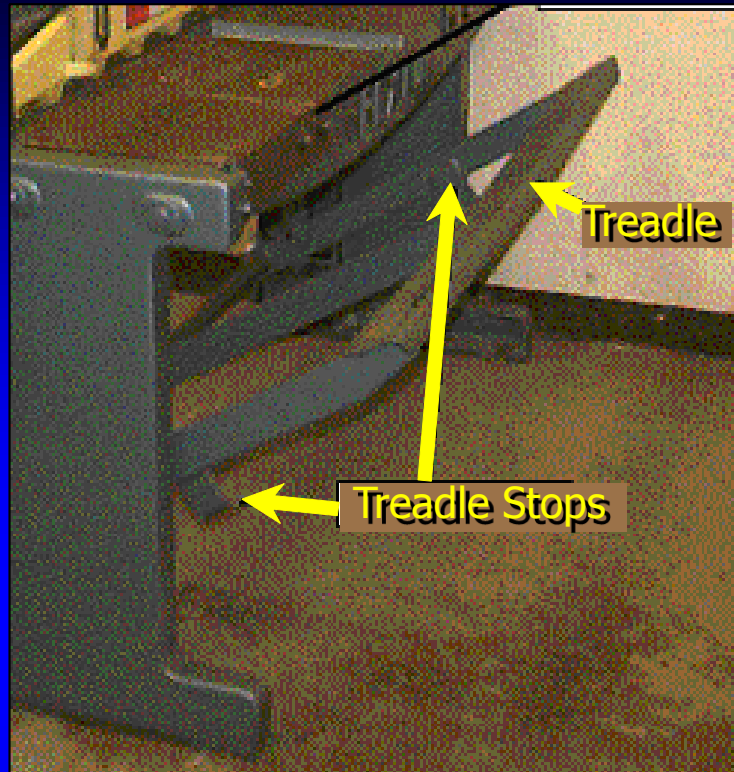
Cutting material other than sheet metal stock can damage the shear blade, creating an unsafe tool for the next person to use the machine.



The shear guard should be set as low as possible, allowing only enough room for sheet stock. Its purpose is to keep your hands away from the point of operation, and must NEVER be removed.



Always keep hands away from the blade when feeding work or making the cut.



Some shears cut manually using a foot operated treadle. Even with stops, be sure you have no feet beneath the treadle when making the cut.

Q: Can you spot what's wrong with this picture?



A: The subject is not wearing gloves while handling sheet metal



Let's Review

- Observe all posted warnings
- Always wear safety glasses
- Wear gloves when handling sheet metal
- Ensure that the shear is rated to cut gauge of steel you're using
- Use the shear to cut only sheet metal
- Keep hands and feet away from working areas

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