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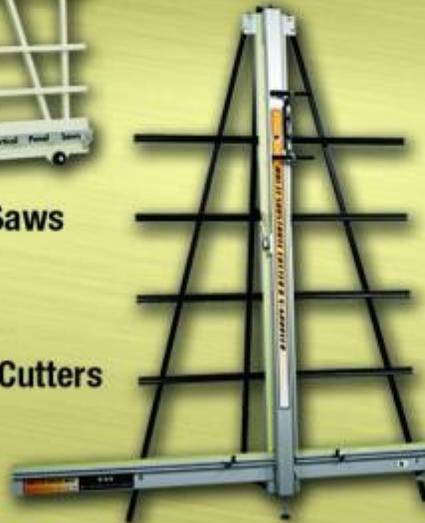


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# Sign Making Equipment That Makes the Cut

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Sign makers and graphic production shops turn to Safety Speed Manufacturing to save time and gain a competitive edge.

The Ham Lake, MN, company offers a wide array of desk top cutters as well as safe, accurate and versatile vertical panel saws capable of making short order of any materials used in the trade.

While Safety Speed has been serving sign makers since its inception in 1958, the company truly stepped up its game in 1995 when it developed a specialized sign making knife kit that could be mounted onto some of its vertical panel saws, noted Brian Donahue, president of Safety Speed. "The kit includes a quick-change knife and saw motor mounting platform, interchangeable knife/saw carriage and a backer board," Donahue said. "It allows for dust-free cutting on a variety of materials such as foam core, Coroplast and Gatorboard."

Not coincidentally, Safety Speed also joined the International Sign Association in 1995. The company has been a member in good standing of the ISA ever since, regularly exhibits at the association's annual trade show in Las Vegas and has ramped up its product offerings for sign shops big time over the past two decades. "The ISA keeps us up to date on industry trends and what the needs of sign shop owners are," Donahue said. "As an association member, we also receive a nice trade show discount to exhibit at the ISA show."

Steve Sheetz, sales representative for Safety Speed, said "All sign shops have to mount images or print images on various sized materials and must cut them to size. They're working with everything from foam board, vinyl and acrylic through PVC, thin aluminum and aluminum composite. What cutting tool or device that they'll use depends on the volume of cutting."

## Sizing Equipment for All Size Shops

Shops rely on desktop cutters to quickly dimension materials for custom signs and displays.

Safety Speed's line of [desktop cutters](#) currently numbers 14. It begins with the 24-inch Artemis Safety Straight Edge for facilitating straight, accurate cuts by hand through the 120-inch Kronos General Purpose Cutter. In between are the Europa and Nemesis desktop cutters, both also with up to 120-inch capacities.

"All of these cutting tools except the Artemis line have the same cutting blades mounted on a rail – utility blade, acrylic scoring blade and textile blade," Sheetz said. "The Artemis is a straight edge with a steel bead in the edge to prevent cutting into the edge of the ruler when making a cut with a hand-held knife."



"It is common for shops to have the Artemis for quick, straight edge cuts on a worktable and one of the others – Europa, Nemesis or Kronos – for guaranteed straight cuts, especially longer cuts," Sheetz added. "Having the cutting head on a rail makes longer cuts easy and the desktop cutters have rubber strips that hold the material in place."



Sheetz said sign and graphic shops that spend one hour or more a day dimensioning material probably “need a motor to handle the workload.” Higher-volume businesses that graduate to a panel saw tend to choose Safety Speed’s [H5 vertical saw](#), he added. “It’s our most popular panel saw in the sign industry because the larger frame size allows production staff to feed material into the frame with minimal flexing on thin plastics and aluminum.”

Also gaining popularity is Safety Speed’s range of [Dust Free Cutters](#) that cut accurately and free of dust and noise. These quick-payback machines can score, cut and v-groove.

Sheetz finished by noting that Safety Speed offers an affordable [Sign Saw Accessory Package](#) to help shops more efficiently cut thin plastics, aluminum, wood and composite materials. The Sign Saw Package includes a hold-down bar, quick-stop gauge, backer board, stand and sign makers saw blade.

Check out and compare Safety Speed’s entire [Sign Cutting Machine](#) line.

*Article written by Rich Christianson.*

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