

A Publication of

# WORKSHOP<sup>®</sup> MD

**CHOOSING A WET/DRY VAC  
FOR A DUST COLLECTION VACUUM**



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## INTRODUCTION

### **The Problem :**

Wood workers need a way to remove the dust and wood particles from the surface of the wood they are working. This is typically done in large shops with a dust collection vacuum, but they are very large and expensive.

### **Proof :**

We have seen these systems run from \$400 to \$40,000, and may require additional components.

### **Additional Issues :**

Obviously, not everyone is capable of this expense nor do they have the electrical requirements or space that may be needed when using a dust collection system.

### **The WORKSHOP Solution :**

WORKSHOP suggests using a wet/dry vac, and provides guidelines that may aid in finding the best product for the wood worker's needs.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A WET/DRY VACUUM FOR A DUST COLLECTION VACUUM

### CONSIDERING A DUST COLLECTION SYSTEM

So maybe you have just got your wood shop together, or you've been working the wood for years. Either way you're considering a central dust collection system. Connecting all major wood working tools in the shop to a collection system keeps sawdust to a minimum and keeps surfaces cleaner. Keeping your shop clean can lead to easier maintenance and longer life for your equipment.

This is a great plan. The issue is most professionals still have limited shop space, and most hobbyists have a limited budget. These issues prohibit purchasing and installing a full dust collection system.

### THE IDEAL SOLUTION

WORKSHOP just may be the ideal solution to this issue. A wet/dry vac can make an ideal portable vacuum for your wood shop. A WORKSHOP vac may offer versatility that you think that your shop does not require. For example your primary need does not include sucking up water or other liquids. However, if this need arises, such as part of the roof caves or leaks, you may be happy about the ability to quickly and easily accomplish cleaning this unplanned task.

In choosing which WORKSHOP will actually work best for your woodworking tasks there are a few features that will best meet your requirements.

### PERFORMANCE

- Performance is one of the features that all shops require. You require you table saw to have the power to do the job you expect and this is no different for your new wood shop vacuum. The question is how do you know which vac has the power that you require.

Some information you find will list a vacuum's peak horsepower and some list airflow in cubic feet per minute (CFM), and still others only list the amp ratings. These changes make it hard to compare apples to apples. Making it even more difficult the way manufacturers measure these readings may differ. For example some brands measure their vacs at or near the motor instead of at the end of the hose where you use it (where WORKSHOP takes their measurements). For more information on how WORKSHOP rates performance visit the website at [www.WORKSHOPvacs.com](http://www.WORKSHOPvacs.com).

So how much power do you require. WORKSHOP suggests a vac with a higher Air Watt rating (Learn more about air watts on the website or on the info-graphic loaded to the [WORKSHOPbrand account on Facebook](#) and [Pinterest](#)). The second option would be a vac with higher CFM to move the debris down the hose into the drum or dust receptacle.

- Second, if you are connecting multiple tools to your vacuum WORKSHOP suggests a large drum capacity. As you may have experienced, the sawdust stacks up quickly. If you go with a wet/dry vac with a smaller drum it will fill up quickly, and you will need to stop working on your wood project to empty your vacuum. Nobody wants to keep maintaining equipment when they could be creating the next great wood masterpiece. If you do carving or workbench woodworking then this may not be a requirement.

CAPACITY

- Third make sure the hose that carries the sawdust and debris from your tools and shop to the dust drum will be large enough to handle your debris. If you have larger chunks of wood a 1-1/2" hose or smaller may not have

HOSE  
DIAMETER

a large enough diameter to transport the debris without getting stuck and restricting further suction. If this happens you once again will be forced to shut down and do some vacuum maintenance. WORKSHOP suggests using a 2-1/2" hose for your shop vacuum increasing airflow and room for your debris.

With most wet/dry vacs you may need to buy an accessory or even an accessory kit to match your vacuum host to your power tools ports.

#### ADDITIONAL TIPS

There are a few other things to look for:

- Make sure the vac has a lower center of gravity, and will be stable when full and pulled around.
- Another feature that might be helpful is if the wet/dry vac accepts a HEPA filter or has a HEPA filtration system. A HEPA filter will reduce the amount of dust that can get past and pushed back into the air through the vac's exhaust
- Noise. In most cases this isn't as big an issue because you are likely wearing ear protection when using your tools anyway. But at times wearing ear protection could be a hassle, so using quieter vac might be ideal.
- Some more expensive vacs come with a switch that turns on the vac when you turn on your tool. While this is a nice feature it is not a requirement. Further, it may require special electrical set-up since the pull from a high-power vac and tool on the same circuit may be great.
- A longer power cord is always useful. This allows you to wheel the vac around the shop and clean without having to unplug, look for an open receptacle, and move.

Recommended WORKSHOP wet/dry vacs for woodworking:

- 16 gallon High-capacity vac (WS1600VA)
- 14 gallon High-Performance cart Vac (WS1400CA)
- 16 gallon stainless steel vac (WS1600SS)
- 3 gallon portable Vac (WS0300VA) for workbench work only
  
- HEPA filter for the WS1600VA, WS1400CA, & WS1600SS
- Fine Dust filter for WS300VA

**WHAT DOES  
WORKSHOP  
RECOMMEND**

# WORKSHOP<sup>®</sup>

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