

Carter Bandsaw Roller Guides

Smooth, Precise and Accurate

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If you own a bandsaw, chances are that Carter Roller Guides have been on your wish list nearly as long as the saw has been in your shop. After trying to suppress that same urge, I relented and installed the Carter Roller Guide Upgrade Kit on my Delta X-5, 14" (#28-475X) saw. Carter makes their Roller Guide kit in versions to fit most popular bandsaw's.

I should note that the decision to upgrade to the Carter Roller Guides was not to cure a problem I was having. The original Delta cool block guides were working well but I have an aversion to something stationary guiding something that is always moving. While the Carter Roller Guide Kit certainly cured that, I had other happy surprises in my future.

The Kit



Everything I needed to make this conversion was in the package, and it all fit the first time!

The Carter Roller Guide kit comes with both the upper and lower guides assembled and ready for installation. During the pre-installation fondling, it became obvious that Carter takes no shortcuts when manufacturing their products, in the USA by the way. Everything is nicely machined from real metal, held together with real fasteners and all of the bearings appear to be top quality.

The Carter Roller Guide kit includes everything you need, including fasteners and a new blade guard section that is designed to work with these guides. Between the quality of the pieces and the instructions, making this conversion was surprisingly easy.

Installation

To make installation easier, I removed the table from the bandsaw. Removing the table when changing blades or doing maintenance around the lower guides is fast and makes those chores very easy.

After removing the Delta guide assemblies, I checked the mounting bolts for the lower guide. Delta made a change from SAE to Metric bolts and Carter includes both types, along with a supplement to the instructions that makes identifying the ones needed very simple. Mine turned out to be the SAE versions.



The lower Carter Roller Guide mount is at least as strong as the original and came with the correct fasteners. There will be no flexing here!



Installing the Carter Roller Guides is very easy and literally took just a few minutes. Removing the table from the saw was a very good idea that added little time and effort to this process.

The only tools needed to install the Carter Roller Guide Kit are 1/4", 1/8" and a 4mm Allen wrenches. I also had to find my large flat-bladed screwdriver to remove the large slotted machine screws that secured the lower Delta guide assembly.

Both the upper and lower Carter guides fit perfectly, reducing the installation time to just a few minutes. While the table was off, I adjusted both sets of guides according to the setup instructions provided. Again, a few minutes was all it took.



The Carter Roller Guides did more for my bandsaw than I anticipated. The stability of the blade is remarkable, as is how that changes the way this machine cuts.

Note: I have adjusted the Carter Roller Guides for blade widths from 3/16" to 3/4" and had plenty of adjustment for all of them.

After double checking all of the mounting and adjustment screws to be sure they were tight, I reinstalled the table and checked it for clearance with the lower guide assembly when tilted to 45-degrees. No problems.

In the Shop

The first cuts I made with the Carter Guides installed were freehand curves, tight and more open. What stuck out from the beginning was the stability of the blade. Even when cranking the wood around in a tight circle, the 1/4"-wide blade barely twisted at all, even though the backside was rubbing against the kerf. Open the circle just enough to accommodate the blade width and there was no twist at all.

Straight cuts using the fence and freehand following a line were very easy. The blade runs absolutely straight with no "hunting" to either side along the way. The same was noticed with all blade sizes I had in the shop from 3/16" to 3/4"-wide. All ran very straight with no wandering or twisting on curves.



Following even heavily curved lines is easy with the new stability of the blade. Cranking the piece around as tight as the blade will allow also produced smooth, predictable cuts.

The stability of the blade made it much easier to follow a complicated layout line precisely. Even on tight radius turns, the blade is very predictable because it is not twisting – relaxing, twisting-relaxing. Though it did very little of this with the standard guides, the difference was immediately noticeable after the Carter Roller Guides were installed.

With a 3/4"-wide blade installed, I noticed less drag on the machine than with the standard guides. Sometimes I could hear the motor slow just a bit during curve cuts that may have been a little tight for that blade. With the Carter Roller Guides in place, the motor continued to hum along, unaffected by what was happening between the blade and wood.

Conclusions

The Carter Roller Guide Upgrade Kit has everything you need to get more from your saw. At \$149.99 (11-04-2005) for the complete upper and lower guide kit, this is a good way to improve the performance of your bandsaw and make many projects a little easier to build.

The quality of the materials and workmanship in the USA-made product means it will last for many years to come.

Visit the Carter Products website – www.carterproducts.com

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The Carter Guides are engineered to be tough, accurate and fit the available space. Even with the table tilted to 45-degrees, the Carter Roller Guides do not touch anything.



Carter Band Saw Guides