

Quick Fix for a Damaged Table Saw Ripping Fence

By Tom Pawlak

25 years of use (some might say abuse) had taken its toll on the heavy aluminum rip fence on our Delta Rockwell 12"-14" Tilting Arbor Saw. Deep saw kerf grooves on the face of the fence had become a hazard because wood occasionally got hung up on it when ripping stock.

Over a few months, each time I used the saw I thought about how it could be repaired. While the plan was still developing in my head, more than once I clamped a flat piece of plywood to the ripping fence face to temporarily create the smooth surface that I needed.

In the end, I decided to permanently repair the damage with thickened epoxy. To make the repair smooth and simple I used a smooth board covered with plastic as a mold release to reform a flat surface. Just about any of our epoxy products would have worked for filling the grooves, but I chose G/5® Five-Minute Adhesive® thickened with 403 Microfibers so the saw would not be out of service for long.

The photos pretty much tell the story. In the end, we have a rip fence just as smooth as new. The good news is if similar damage occurs in the future it can easily be repaired by repeating the process.

Here are the steps:

1. Clean the surface of the aluminum with an abrasive pad.
2. Abrade the surface with a wire brush, taking care to remove dirt in the grooves.
3. Protect the deck of the saw with plastic drop cloth or by covering it with wide, shiny packaging tape.
4. Locate something flat and smooth to use as the form for molding the epoxy into a smooth surface.
5. Cover the form with shiny plastic packaging tape (this will be the mold release surface).
6. Mix an appropriate sized batch of G/5 Five-Minute Adhesive and thicken it with 403 Microfibers to a mayonnaise consistency. (Additionally, 420 Aluminum Powder could be added if you are trying to make your repair less noticeable.)
7. Quickly apply the mixture to the damaged section on the rip fence.
8. Immediately position the flat form on the face of the rip fence and clamp it in place.
9. Clean up excess epoxy that squeezes out before it hardens.
10. Allow 15 minutes for the G/5 Adhesive to fully cure.
11. Remove the smooth & flat mold form by working wood wedges under the edges.

Clean up any slight irregularities on the surface of the fence with a flat scraper or with 120-grit sandpaper wrapped around a hard & flat sanding block.

The surface should now be as smooth as new. ■

