

## Safety First – using Cole jaws (Gary Guenther)

One of the problems woodturners face is how to hold a piece to turn off the last nub on the bottom – to remove all evidence of how the piece was held on the lathe.

There are many ways to do it, depending on the situation. One good one, at least for some shapes, is to use Cole jaws on your chuck. This is basically a big, round metal plate, cut into four pieces and screwed to your chuck jaws. The sections have a number of holes into which can be screwed bumpers (buttons, grippers, pick your favorite name) that are used to grip the periphery of your work piece – usually from the outside, but sometimes even from the inside. This note relates to the former, outside case.



Bumpers come in a variety of sizes and shapes, and their utility depends on the shape of the work piece. Some of them are fairly short, while others are quite long (tall). These tall ones are the ones I'm talking about. The image here is fairly representative.



The safety problem arises because when the chuck is spinning, the bumpers become invisible, and you become tempted (trust me) to stick a finger or tool in there. Believe me, that is not a good idea. Don't ask me how I know!

The solution is simple: wrap a couple layers of masking tape around the periphery of the bumpers, right out to their ends. Then they are easy to see and have hopefully been rendered safe from careless intrusion.