

Below is an e-mail message from Jim Frye to an individual who is considering purchasing a used BT3000. In the e-mail message, Jim does a great job outlining things to look for to determining the overall condition of an "experienced" BT3000.

I think the major things to look for a used BT3000 are as follows, and not necessarily in order of importance. This is the order I thought of them.

1. The lead screw that runs the entire motor and arbor mount (locker bracket) passes through a threaded hole in the aluminum motor end bell casting. Improper maintenance can cause undo wear on the casting. If it strips out the fix is to replace the motor and it's casting (about \$200), or rethread the casting with a helicoil insert. This repair is less than \$30 if you do it yourself and actually makes the unit better than when it was new. If the motor is loose or sloppy on the lead screw, the threads are badly worn.

2. The brush end cap of the motor (opposite from the arbor end) is held on with two self-tapping screws. Remove them and the end cap to inspect the condition of the brushes (they're pretty cheap and easy to replace), and the amount of dust inside the motor. If there's a lot of dust inside, the saw may have been used with out a dust collection device attached and simply sucked a bunch in. See if you can blow it out. Maybe the seller has a compressed air source. Hopefully the seller has cleaned the saw up, which should be an indication of whether the saw was cared for or not.

3. Inspect the plastic roller holder casting at the rear of the rip fence for cracks or breakage. This will render the fence useless. However, the part is really inexpensive (less than \$3.00) to replace.

4. Inspect the plastic slides on the Sliding Miter Table (SMT). Look for wear, not just out of adjustment. The slides are mounted on eccentric screw mounts and can be adjusted for no side play. Also, the slides are reversible, so if one side is worn, they can be rotated 180 degrees and you are back in business. An entire set costs less than \$3.00 anyway. Also check to see that the SMT track is not bent.

5. Back to the rip fence. See, I told you these were in no set order. Make sure the entire head casting is not cracked in any way. I've not seen a price to replace this casting and it might require buying a whole new fence assembly.

6. When you are looking at the underside of the saw, make a close inspection of the drive belts. If not abused, they should last a long, long time. If they are cracked, they will need to be replaced. I paid \$11.60 apiece for new belts this year at an appliance parts store in town. Replacing the belts is a 1 1/2 to 3 hour job if you've not done it before.

7. Check to see that the front and rear rails are not bent in any plane. These two extrusions are the basis for most of the work you do on the saw and if they are not straight, neither will your work.

8. Check the condition of the stainless steel shims that slide between the locker bracket and the guide casting under the saw. These shims are crucial to the operation of the saw. If they are missing or don't move up and down with the saw arbor, they will have to be replaced. They are not expensive (less than \$2.50 apiece) but replacing them requires a major tear down of the saw similar to replacing the drive belts. If the saw arbor is difficult to raise and lower, it's most likely the shims.

9. Check to see that the motor starts and runs with a steady sound and no screeching or smoking (see dust check above). It should sound like a big plunge router at full speed (the motor is really a 15 amp. derivative of a router motor). Also check the switch. Early production BT3Ks had a two-button on/off switch that was recalled by the company and replaced with the current production switch. The new switch has a rocker on/off switch under a top hinged cover. You raise the cover and push the rocker to turn the saw on. Simply tapping the cover turns the saw off.

10. Make sure the arbor is not bent. Watch it while it slows down after shutting the motor off. Grab the arbor (when it's not turning and the blade's been removed) and tug and wiggle it. It should not move. If it does, the arbor bearings are worn. This is highly unlikely as the BT3K is the only table saw on the market with three bearing sets in the arbor. Mount a good blade on the arbor and turn the saw on and off. Watch the blade for wobble that might indicate a bent arbor or a bad arbor flange. Changing an arbor or the bearings is doable, but I've not heard of anyone doing it in the nearly eight years I've had the saw.

11. Check the build date on the serial number decal on the side of the saw near the electrical plug. The last four digits that set off to the right of the serial number are the build date. The format is YYWW where: YY is the year of manufacture and WW the week of manufacture. This will really tell how old the saw is.

12. Check the underside of all of the table castings for cracks. The right side accessory table has a plastic locking tab that hooks under the rail to hold the table in position. This can wear with normal usage. It is reversible and cheap to replace.

13. Check the holes for the table insert. There are three of them for the steel plate and four for the plastic zero clearance throat plates. Run a throat plate screw into each hole that has been tapped and try to snug the screw down. You don't have to really torque the screw hard, just see if the holes are stripped. I have not heard of anyone stripping these holes out, but I think there is enough metal to drill and tap for the next bigger size. This saw is metric by the way.

14. Well, I can't stop on 13 things to look for. That would be bad luck. Check the tabletops for dings, gouges, and dents. This won't harm the performance, but will be a fairly good indicator of how well the saw has been cared for.

Well, that's about it for looking over a used BT3000. Good Luck and remember, you can get a reconditioned BT3000 without the stand for \$319 with a one year warranty.