

THE DICTIONARY OF SAWMILL SIGN LANGUAGE

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Ingenious sawmill workers have devised a sign language that enables them to convey meanings, directions, ask questions, and carry on a conversation without trying to shout over the roar of the machinery. For those uninformed, there are some signs we must withhold, but, to begin with, how about learning to count.

1. Extend hand, index finger up.
2. Extend hand, index finger and second finger up.
3. Extend hand, second, third and fourth fingers up.
4. Extend hand, all four fingers up.
5. Extend hand, four fingers and thumb up.
6. Extend hand, fist closed.
7. Extend hand, fist closed, forefinger crooked.
8. Extend hand, fist closed, with second finger straight out.
9. Extend hand, fist closed, with thumb down.
10. Extend hand, four fingers and thumb out, and twist hand.
11. Extend hand, fist closed, with index finger down.
12. Extend hand, fist closed, and twist.
13. Extend hand, second, third and fourth fingers out, and make side to side motion.
14. Extend hand, with all four fingers out, and make side to side motion.
15. Extend hand, with all four fingers and thumb out, and make side to side motion.
16. Extend hand outward with fist closed.

17. Extend hand with forefinger crooked and make side to side motion.
18. Extend hand, second finger out, and make side to side motion.
19. Extend hand, thumb down, and make side to side motion.
20. Extend hand, thumb and index finger closed to make zero, and make side to side motion.

For 21, we signal "20", and then "1".

For 22, we signal "20", and then "2", and so on to thirty which we indicate by "3", the fingers parallel to the body and making side to side motion.

For 31, we combine "30" and "1", and so on to forty, which is made by the "4" sign and making side to side hand motion as in thirty.

In our next chapter, we will take up more or less polite social repartee. Watch for it in The Family Tree.