

OSHA FactSheet

Working Safely with Chain Saws

The chain saw is one of the most efficient and productive portable power tools used in the industry. It can also be one of the most dangerous. If you learn to operate it properly and maintain the saw in good working condition, you can avoid injury as well as be more productive.

Before Starting the Saw

- Check controls, chain tension, and all bolts and handles to ensure they are functioning properly and adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Fuel the saw at least 10 feet from sources of ignition.
- Check the fuel container for the following requirements:
 - Must be metal or plastic
 - Must not exceed a 5 gallon capacity
 - Must be approved by the Underwriters Laboratory, Factory Mutual (FM), the Department of Transportation (DOT), or other Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

While Running the Saw

- Keep hands on the handles, and maintain secure footing while operating the chainsaw.
- Clear the area of obstacles that might interfere with cutting the tree or using the retreat path.
- Do not cut directly overhead.
- Shut off or release throttle prior to retreating.
- Shut off or engage the chain brake whenever the saw is carried more than 50 feet, or across hazardous terrain.
- Be prepared for kickback; use saws that reduce kickback danger (chain brakes, low kickback chains, guide bars, etc.).

Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

Personal protective equipment (PPE), for the head, ears, eyes, face, hands, and legs are designed to prevent or lessen the severity of injuries to loggers and other workers using chain saws.

- PPE must be inspected prior to use on each work shift to ensure it is in serviceable condition
- The following PPE must be used when hazards make it necessary:
 - Head Protection
 - Hearing Protection
 - Eye/Face Protection
 - Leg Protection
 - Foot Protection
 - Hand Protection

Training

Employers involved in tree removal/logging are required to assure that their employees are able to safely perform their assigned tasks. When loggers are trained to work safely they should be able to anticipate and avoid injury from the job related hazards they may encounter. Training requirements include:

- Specific work procedures, practices and requirements of the work site, including the recognition, prevention, and control of general safety and health hazards.
- Requirements of the OSHA Logging standard, Bloodborne Pathogens standard, First Aid, and CPR training.
- How to safely perform assigned work tasks, including the specific hazards associated with each task and the measures and work practices which will be used to control those hazards.
- How to safely use, operate, and maintain tools, machines and vehicles which the employee will be required to utilize in completing the assigned requirements.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

Think Safety!

For more complete information:



U.S. Department of Labor

www.osha.gov

(800) 321-OSHA



Chain Saw Safety Tips

Operating a chain saw is inherently hazardous. Potential injuries can be minimized by using proper personal protective equipment and safe operating procedures.

Before Starting a Chain Saw

- Check controls, chain tension, and all bolts and handles to ensure that they are functioning properly and that they are adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure that the chain is always sharp and the lubrication reservoir is full.
- Start the saw on the ground or on another firm support. Drop starting is never allowed.
- Start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area, with the chain's brake engaged.

Fueling a Chain Saw

- Use approved containers for transporting fuel to the saw.
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any sources of ignition when performing construction activities. **No smoking during fueling.**
- Use a funnel or a flexible hose when pouring fuel into the saw.
- Never attempt to fuel a running or HOT saw.

Chain Saw Safety

- Clear away dirt, debris, small tree limbs and rocks from the saw's chain path. Look for nails, spikes or other metal in the tree before cutting.
- Shut off the saw or engage its chain brake when carrying the saw on rough or uneven terrain.
- Keep your hands on the saw's handles, and maintain secure footing while operating the saw.
- Proper personal protective equipment must be worn when operating the saw, which includes hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Be careful that the trunk or tree limbs will not bind against the saw.
- Watch for branches under tension, they may spring out when cut.
- Gasoline-powered chain saws must be equipped with a protective device that minimizes chain saw kickback.
- Be cautious of saw kick-back. To avoid kick-back, do not saw with the tip. If equipped, keep tip guard in place.

For more complete information:

 Occupational
Safety and Health
Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA

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Protecting Workers from Heat Stress

Heat Illness

Exposure to heat can cause illness and death. The most serious heat illness is heat stroke. Other heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash, should also be avoided.

There are precautions that can be taken any time temperatures are high and the job involves physical work.

Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
- Heavy physical labor
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces
- Low liquid intake
- Waterproof clothing

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
- Weakness and wet skin
- Irritability or confusion
- Thirst, nausea, or vomiting

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures (fits)
- May stop sweating

To Prevent Heat Illness:

- Establish a complete heat illness prevention program.
- Provide training about the hazards leading to heat stress and how to prevent them.
- Provide a lot of cool water to workers close to the work area. At least one pint of water per hour is needed.



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- Modify work schedules and arrange frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks for workers new to the heat or those that have been away from work to adapt to working in the heat (acclimatization).
- Designate a responsible person to monitor conditions and protect workers who are at risk of heat stress.
- Consider protective clothing that provides cooling.



How to Protect Workers

- Know signs/symptoms of heat illnesses; monitor yourself; use a buddy system.
- Block out direct sun and other heat sources.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Drink often and BEFORE you are thirsty. Drink water every 15 minutes.
- Avoid beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.



What to Do When a Worker is Ill from the Heat

- Call a supervisor for help. If the supervisor is not available, call 911.
- Have someone stay with the worker until help arrives.
- Move the worker to a cooler/shaded area.
- Remove outer clothing.
- Fan and mist the worker with water; apply ice (ice bags or ice towels).
- Provide cool drinking water, if able to drink.

IF THE WORKER IS NOT ALERT or seems confused, this may be a heat stroke. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY and apply ice as soon as possible.



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For more information:

OSHA[®] Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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