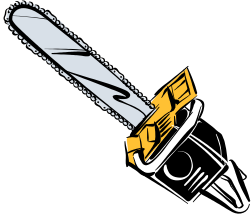


Safety Note # 9

GENERAL CHAINSAW SAFETY



The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates approximately 36,000 people are treated in hospital emergency departments for injuries from using chainsaws each year. The common areas of injury are the arm and hands, followed by the leg, head, feet, and upper body. The average chainsaw injury requires 110 stitches, and medical costs for chainsaw injuries exceed \$350 million per year. Therefore, operating a chainsaw requires extra precaution prior to operation.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the chainsaw operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the chainsaw, including checking lubrication, chain tension, drive sprocket, guide bar, oil and air filters, and for electric chain saws, inspect the electrical cord and plug.
- If a chainsaw fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the chainsaw from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete the red tag with appropriate information.
- Avoid working alone whenever possible. Ensure to let someone know your location in the event of an emergency.
- California Code of Regulations (Title 8, Section 3421(d)) requires chainsaw safety training prior to performing tree trimming assignments.

Operating Precautions

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including a hard hat, safety glasses with side shields, ear plugs, gloves, steel-toed boots, and if available, protective chaps.
- Always start the chainsaw on the ground. Never drop start or start a chainsaw on your knee.
- Frequently check the chain tension. The chain separates $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the bar without effort. Tight chains won't bite into the wood and can prematurely wear out the drive sprocket, while loose chains can derail from the bar and whip back toward the operator.
- Do not operate a chainsaw when tired or taking prescriptive medicine.
- Maintain a secure grip with both hands on the chainsaw handles for control.
- Cut while standing to the side and out of the plane of the chain and guide bar.
- Keep legs and feet from under the chainsaw.
- Chainsaws are not designed to cut anything other than wood. Do not cut near wire fences or into wood that contains nails or other metal objects.
- Do not overreach or cut wood above shoulder height and never use a chainsaw from a ladder or tree.
- Kickback occurs when the end of the bar strikes an object and the chain momentarily snags or pinches. Prevent kickback by never letting the nose of the guide bar (i.e. saw tip) contact wood surfaces and by making sure your cutting area is free from obstructions.
- Before refueling, allow the saw engine to cool. Never attempt to fuel a running or hot saw.
- Always transport chainsaws with the engine stopped and the chain and guide bar pointed backwards.