

Chainsaws

Explain dangers

Kickback can occur when the chain becomes snagged and suddenly stops moving. The change in momentum causes the chainsaw to move in the opposite direction, towards the operator.

The chain runs at very high speeds, and the cutting blade is extremely sharp. Each tooth is designed to remove a 1/4-inch chip of material.

Chainsaws are extremely loud, and parts can become very hot.

Chainsaws produce a lot of vibration, both from the engine and from the process of cutting.

Chainsaws with combustible engines produce toxic exhaust fumes. The gasoline-oil mixture can catch on fire if spilled while filling a hot engine.

Identify controls

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Wear eye protection that is CSA or ANSI-approved. A face shield may be required.
- Use gloves, a hard hat, safety boots, earplugs or earmuffs, and leg protection.
- Never wear loose clothing, unbuttoned jackets, flared sleeves and cuffs, scarves, tie strings, cords, chains, jewelry, etc. when operating a chainsaw.

MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

- Always follow the manufacturer's maintenance instructions for your specific chainsaw. Keep a copy of the owner's manual on hand.
- Inspect the chainsaw before using it. Make sure that the guide bar is tight, the chain is snug, the machine is lubricated, and the teeth are sharp. Check the drive links, sprockets, chain catch, and cutters for damage. Run the saw at half throttle and apply the chain brake to make sure it works properly.
- Never use a chainsaw that has damaged parts.
- Never alter any of the safety features such as the chain brake, throttle trigger interlock, ramped depth gauges, etc.
- Make sure the ratio of gas to oil meets the manufacturer's recommendations.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

- During start-up, keep everyone at least six feet away, place the chainsaw on solid ground, and secure it with one foot in the rear handle. Grasp the top handle with one hand, apply the chain brake, and set the throttle lock. Pull the recoil handle towards your chest.
- Never "drop start" or "throw start" a chainsaw and don't let the cord snap back to the starter. Let it idle for a minute or two to warm up.
- Hold the saw firmly with both hands and keep your feet firmly planted before you start to cut. Stand to the left of the saw and hold your left arm straight. Activate the throttle with your right hand. (Reverse for left-handed saws.)
- To prevent kickback, cut only one thing at a time. Use the bumper spike to rest the chainsaw on top of what you're cutting and allow the sharp teeth of the chain and the power of the engine to do the cutting. Don't force it.
- Bring the saw to full operating speed before starting the cut. If you feel resistance or you need to apply extra pressure in order to cut, the chain may be dull. Using a dull chain is not only a safety hazard, but it also increases your risk of developing hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).
- Never pull the chainsaw blade towards you and don't operate it above shoulder height.
- Apply the chain brake and shut the motor off before setting the chainsaw down or moving it long distances. Allow it to cool off.
- Use a bar guard to cover the chain when carrying or transporting it. Carry the saw facing downwards and to your side with the bar point behind you.
- During transit, use a carrying case if possible and secure it to prevent movement. Never transport a chainsaw in the passenger's seat of a vehicle. Where possible, transport it in a well-vented cabinet or in the open air.

Demonstrate

Show workers the proper way to start the chainsaw and to hold it while cutting.