

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.

