

USING LANDSCAPING EQUIPMENT

General Safety Practices

- Review the operator's manual for instructions and precautions
- Practice using all the controls and make sure you can stop the machine quickly
- Make sure all guards and safety devices are in place and working properly
- Inspect the machine for loose, broken or damaged parts; tighten bolts or make needed repairs or replacements before using the machine
- Make sure the equipment has a working engine interlock and a deadman control

When Refueling

- Store fuel in a properly marked safety can
- Fill the fuel tank out of doors
- Make sure engine is off and cool
- Do not smoke while handling fuel and keep away from sparks and open flames
- Wipe up any spill immediately

Before Using the Equipment

- Wear close-fitting clothes, sturdy non-slip steel-toed safety shoes or boots, eye protection, ear protection and, in summer, a wide-brimmed hat (no bare feet, sandals, or sneakers)
- Check overhead clearance of electrical wires and other hazards
- Inspect the work area for debris, ditches, potholes, stumps, irrigation valves, etc.; clear removable items and mark the others
- For riding machines, adjust the seat, fasten the seat belt, set the parking brake, place the shift lever in neutral or park, and disengage the power take-off before cranking the engine

When Using the Equipment

- Start the engine out of doors
- Before backing up, look behind you for people or obstructions
- Keep your hands and feet away from moving parts

Hedge Trimmers



What Can Happen

- Cut fingers
- Hearing loss
- Eye injuries
- Back strain
- Hand-arm vibration injury

Choosing a Hedge Trimmer

- When buying a trimmer, choose one with the cutting teeth and guards close enough together that your fingers can't fit between them

- Choose a trimmer that has two handles, including a wide forward-handle high above the cutting blades
- Select a trimmer that is lightweight and easy to handle

Safe Work Guidelines

Before Use

- Sharpen the blades if necessary
- Inspect the shrubbery carefully for hidden wires, posts, or trash

During Use

- Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, eye protection, and ear protection
- If trimming tall shrubbery, stand on a stepladder or another stable surface; Do not stand on an unstable surface such as a chair, extension or straight ladder
- Keep your hands and body away from the blades
- Work slowly and deliberately; plan your cuts before you make them
- Take an occasional rest break to avoid fatigue
- **Do not** operate the trimmer above chest height

After Use

- Store the trimmer on a low shelf with the blades locked and turned away from the front of the shelf

String Trimmers



What Can Happen

- Cuts
- Finger or toe amputations
- Eye injuries
- Hearing loss
- Burns
- Injuries to other people

Safe Work Guidelines

During Use

- Make sure the machine is in good repair before using it
- Always wear the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Safety glasses
 - Face shield
 - Gloves
 - Long sleeves and pants, and
 - Hearing protection
- Wear a harness to reduce the risk of back injury when using gas-powered trimmers
- Shut the machine off before making adjustments
- Make sure that no one is near the work area – when people pass by, stop trimming until they have moved a safe distance away

Electric String Trimmers

- Make sure the cord is in good repair
- Disconnect the power source before making manual adjustments
- Do not use the string trimmer if the ground is wet
- Should only be plugged into GFI outlets

Earth Compactors

What Can Happen

- Cut or crushed toes or other body parts
- Hearing loss
- Eye injuries
- Numbness in hands
- White finger disease
- Illness or death from carbon monoxide or nitrous oxide poisoning

Safe Work Guidelines

Before Use

- Only trained operators are allowed to operate compactors
- Fill the fuel tank only up to the $\frac{3}{4}$ level
- Make sure surface being compacted is stable and will not cave in
- Keep other workers and bystanders away from the work area

During Use

- Use a mechanical lifting device or ask another person to help you lift a compactor; attach safety straps if mechanically lifting a compactor more than 60cm (2ft) off the ground
- Keep your feet clear of the machine
- Grasp the machine lightly but securely; let it – not your back – do the work
- Position your body to prevent contact with the hot parts of the engine

After Use

- Shut off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before making adjustments or repairs (except a carburetor adjustment), and before leaving the compactor unattended
- Store a jumping-jack type of compactor upright

Power Tillers



What Can Happen

- Cuts
- Amputation
- Eye injuries
- White finger disease
- Numbness of fingers
- Illness or death from carbon monoxide poisoning

Safe Work Guidelines

Before Use

- Clear the work area of hazards such as wires, stones, bottles, cans, sticks, etc.
- **Do not** use the tiller near underground utilities, irrigation pipes, trees, shrubs, etc.
- Make sure there are no bystanders in the working area
- Before starting the tiller, make sure the depth regulator is working

During Use

- Keep your hands and feet clear of all moving parts
- If you hit an object, disengage the tiller and stop the engine to inspect for damage; repair any damage before using the machine again

After Use

- when turning or transporting the tiller, disengage the transmission
- when transporting a tiller, drive the machine up secure ramps or ask for help to lift it; tie down the machine securely to prevent it from rolling turn the machine off before leaving it unattended

Leaf Blowers



What Can Happen

- Hearing loss
- Eye injuries
- White finger disease
- Numbness in fingers
- Illness or death from carbon monoxide poisoning

Safe Work Guidelines

Before Use

- Note the location of the controls to make stopping the blower easier
- Use a facemask, screen, or safety goggles to protect your eyes from dust and flying objects; wear a dust mask in extremely dusty conditions
- Keep bystanders at least 9m (30 feet) away
- **Do not** wear ties and clothing with chains or straps while operating a blower
- **Do not** operate the blower without the tubing

- **Do not** use the blower to spread or mist chemicals, fertilizers, or other toxic substances
- **Do not** use the blower while standing on a ladder, tree, rooftop, or other unstable surface

During Use

- Start and run the leaf blower while standing upright and only when out of doors
- Direct the debris away from people, animals, glass, and solid objects that could cause material to ricochet
- If electric, do not use on wet ground and use a GFI

After Use

- Stop the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before maintaining or repairing the leaf blower

Snow Blowers



What Can Happen

- Cut or crushed toes or other body parts
- Amputation
- Hearing loss
- Eye injuries
- Muscle strain
- Injury to others from flying debris

Safe Work Guidelines

Before Use

- Use only the attachments and accessories approved by the manufacturer
- Make sure all guards and shields are in place
- Check bearings, chains, U-joints, etc. and replace any damaged components
- Keep other people away from starting and operating areas
- Disengage all clutches and shift into neutral before starting the motor
- Check shear bolts frequently for proper tightness
- Adjust the collector housing to clear gravel or crushed rock surfaces
- Ensure that path is free of foreign objects

During Use

- Walk slowly, maintain good footing and hold the handles firmly
- Turn slowly on slopes
- Keep away from discharge opening; direct plume of snow away from buildings and vehicles
- Stop the motor if you strike an object; remove the wire from the spark plug and thoroughly inspect the snow thrower for any damage; make any necessary repairs before further use
- Do not make adjustments or put your hand into the auger housing while the motor is running
- If the unit begins to vibrate more than usual, stop the motor and look for the cause
- Do not operate the machine at high speeds on slippery surfaces
- Never use hands to unclog the snow blower

After Use

- Make sure that the collector and all moving parts have stopped before cleaning, inspecting, or repairing the machine
- Run the machine a few minutes after throwing snow to prevent the collector or impeller from freezing
- Allow the engine to cool before storing the machine inside
- Only fuel when outside and the engine has cooled

© Workplace Safety & Prevention Services 2011. Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) grants permission to approved end users to reproduce this document in whole or in part, provided its intended use is for non-commercial, educational purposes and that full acknowledgement is given to the WSPS. Approved end users are firms registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. WSPS reserves the right to extend this permission to other stakeholders and interested parties by express written permission upon application. WSPS extends no warranty to materials amended or altered by the end user. Under no circumstances is this document, or any portion thereof, to be duplicated for purposes of sale or for external reproduction or distribution.

Revised: June 2011