

AGRICULTURAL SAFETY TOPICS

CHAIN SAWS

Objective:

To know what safety precautions to take when working with a chain saw and to practice proper maintenance of the chain saw.

Background:

Operator's Manual

Keep the operator's manual with the chain saw. If the manual is missing, contact the manufacturer for a replacement. Periodically review the manual for safe operating procedures.



Use the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for the job. Use the following as a guide:

- Clothing should fit well and be free of dangling or ragged edges which can become tangled in the saw.
- The use of nylon mesh protective leg chaps and/or knee pads can provide increased protection for the legs.
- A hard hat protects the head from falling limbs or branches. A properly fitted hat is cool, comfortable and provides protection from head injury.
- A full face shield or safety goggles/glasses that have side shields prevent injury from flying wood chips, twigs, and sawdust.
- Protect ears from the high level of noise produced by the saw.
- Safety boots or shoes with high tops protect ankles in the event of accidental contact with a moving saw blade. Steel toed boots will help protect the feet from falling limbs or logs.
- Lightweight leather gloves protect hands from cuts, splinters, and abrasion.

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Preventive Maintenance

Keep saw in good repair. Consult the operator’s manual and check for needed maintenance before each use. The operator’s manual can be the best source of information for this procedure.

Sharpen the saw if:

- The chain tends to “walk” sideways while cutting.
- The cut shows fine powder instead of chips.
- It is necessary to press hard to cut.
- You smell burnt wood.

Good cutting action and a long chain life increase with correct chain tension. If too loose a chain will derail; if too tight a chain will bind.

Proper lubrication prolongs the life of the saw and increases safety.

Follow these precautions when fueling and starting the chain saw engine.

- Only refuel the engine when it is cool.
- Never smoke when working with a power saw.
- Start by putting one foot on the bracket to the rear of the saw.
- Grip the top handle of the saw firmly with one hand and use the other to pull the starting rope. Never drop start the saw.

Transport a power chain saw in a chain guard or a carrying case. Do not carry the saw in the passenger area of a vehicle. Brace the saw so that it cannot tip. When storing the saw, drain the fuel tank in a safe area, and run the engine at the idle until it stops. Remove the chain and store in oil. Disconnect the spark plug to reduce an accidental starting. Keep out of the reach of children.

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Review the Following Points:

- Wear close fitting clothing.
- Use a face shield or safety goggles, ear protection, safety boots and gloves
- Keep equipment in good repair and make adjustments as needed.
- Follow recommendations for refueling and safely starting saws.

Based upon: Ohio State University Extension. *Chainsaw Safety*. Retrieved from website <http://ohioline.osu.edu/atts/modules.html>

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