

Topic: Chainsaw Safety

Unless your municipality is involved in urban forestry, or even forestry as some of our members are, there are probably limited times a chainsaw must be used. Limited use is often just as risky as continual use as workers may not always remember the hazards or safe procedures.



To begin, there are several forms of personal protective equipment required; some are pictured here:

- Hard hat
- Hearing protection
- Eye/face protection
- Steel toe boots
- Cut proof chaps/apron
- Non-slip grip gloves (not pictured)

Before starting the chainsaw, make sure your protective clothing is complete and fitting properly. Your clothing should be snug-fitting, with no loose bits to get in the way or caught in the saw.

Before you use a chainsaw, get trained! In addition, read the owners' manual. Make sure you understand all instructions before starting the saw.

The chainsaw must be manufactured and maintained in accordance with CSA Standard Z62.1-03 (R2008), and must be equipped with a safety chain and chain brake.

Before starting the chainsaw, do a quick hazard assessment of your surrounding area, including

hazards to yourself and others: weather conditions, terrain, animals, people, buildings, powerlines, vehicles, etc.

Assess the condition of the saw:

- Remove the chain guard and inspect the saw and machine for damage, loose and/or missing parts, or other signs of wear, or leaks around the engine
- Ensure the guide bar is tight and chain fits snugly without binding; adjust the chain tension, if required.
- Inspect the saw chain to ensure it is properly lubricated and is sharp. Sharpen and lubricate, as needed, while wearing gloves.
- Check the air filter and clean when needed
- Check the muffler spark arrestor screen, if present
- Inspect the chain catcher – it helps reduce the risk of injury when a chain breaks or comes off the guide bar
- Ensure that the chain is clear of obstructions before starting
- Engage the chain brake before starting the chain saw

Starting the Chainsaw

- Ensure that you have secure footing and your stance is well balanced



- Hold the saw firmly on the ground using your foot. Point the chain away from your body and nearby obstructions.
- Use a quick, sharp motion on the starter cord
- DO NOT “drop start” the saw. This method leaves only one hand to control a running saw and can result in leg cuts

Using the Chainsaw

- Warm up the saw before cutting. The saw should idle without the chain turning. If the chain continues to turn after the throttle switch is released, stop the saw and adjust the idle as shown in the owners' manual.
- Check that the throttle trigger, throttle trigger interlock and master control lever are operating properly
- Never operate a chainsaw when working alone
- Use the correct saw; the weight, power and bar length need to be suited to the job.
- Operate the chain saw in a firm two-handed grip with fingers and thumb surrounding the handles. Keep both feet firmly positioned.
- Maintain full power throughout each cut
- Turn off the chainsaw before refueling or doing any maintenance
- Keep your saw clean, free of sawdust, dirt and oil



Get trained! Only those who are appropriately trained should operate any equipment, including the chainsaw. These tips are just a few of the key items you need to know.