



MAFES Dawg Tracks



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*Safety Tips: Work Safely
with Chainsaws*

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approximately 36,000 people are injured each year by chainsaws.

- The average chainsaw injury requires 110 stitches, and the average medical cost in 1989 was \$5,600. In the year of 2000 the same injury cost was over \$12,000. You can only imagine what the cost is today. These figures were recorded by Davis Garvin Agency, an agency specializing in loggers' insurance.
- Medical costs for chainsaw injuries based on these facts amount to about \$350 million dollars per year.
- Workman's compensation costs, based on the assumption that four weeks recovery is required, can be estimated at \$125 million dollars each year.
- Loss of production, as well as loss of quality of life for the injured, cannot be quantified but may in fact represent the single largest cost.
- The U.S. Product Commission in 1994 recorded injuries by body part, following is their findings:
 - ~ Head injuries – 3,418 ~ Leg injuries – 16,348
 - ~ Upper Body – 2,141 ~ Arm/Hand injuries – 17,994
 - ~ Foot area – 2,885

Chainsaws are labor-saving and versatile machines, but as noted above, can be critically dangerous if the operator doesn't stay focused on his work and remain conscious of the safety factors involved.

DANGERS OF CHAINSAW USE-

- ✓ Many chainsaw accidents happen because the operator doesn't understand the saw's hazards or doesn't follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ One of the biggest hazards of chainsaw use is kickback. This often occurs when the nose or tip of the guide bar comes into contact with an object such as a rock, log or branch. The guide bar abruptly kicks up and back toward the operator- causing the person to lose control of the saw.

SAFETY TIPS BEFORE YOU START CHAINSAW USE-

- ✓ Become familiar with all the features of the chainsaw before you start to use it.
- ✓ Carefully review the manufacturer's instructions. If you don't understand them, talk to your supervisor.
- ✓ Be sure you are in good physical condition. If you have doubts or feel tired, relay this to your supervisor. Chainsaw work is strenuous, so you need to feel good and be in good physical condition.
- ✓ Check your clothing. Don't operate a chainsaw while wearing loose fitting clothing, jewelry, scarf, cuffed pants or anything that could get tangled in the saw. Tie long hair back in a "ponytail."

- ✓ Wear the proper protective equipment. This should include heavy duty gloves with a good grip, sturdy shoes or boots with non-slip soles; head, eye, hearing, and leg protection. With leg protection you should wear the protective chaps.

CHECK THE AREA AROUND YOU-

Make sure that:

- ✓ There are no people or animals in the area where you're working.
- ✓ The ground is free of obstacles, such as rocks, stumps, holes and or slippery brush.
- ✓ You can get a firm footing on the ground.
- ✓ That you know which way the tree will fall if you are felling, And that you have a safe escape route out of the area.

REDUCED THE CHANCES OF KICKBACK-

- ✓ Get a firm grip on the saw with both hands and plant both feet firmly on the ground.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the tip of the guide bar to make sure it doesn't come into contact with another object.
- ✓ Saw below shoulder height, don't reach.
- ✓ Saw with the engine on full throttle.
- ✓ Don't cut with the nose or tip of the guide bar.
- ✓ Stand slightly to the left of the guide bar- not directly behind the saw.

OTHER SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ Be sure your saw is in good working condition all the time.
- ✓ Don't remove the chainsaw safety equipment.
- ✓ Turn the engine off before you put the saw down or carry it.
- ✓ Don't cut with the saw between your legs or straddle the limb when you're cutting.
- ✓ Be alert for spring back when cutting a limb under tension so you aren't struck when the tension in the wood fiber is released.
- ✓ Keep the saw and its handles clean and dry.
- ✓ Wipe up spilled fuel and oil after refueling.
- ✓ Refrain from refueling the saw while the engine is hot.
- ✓ Properly maintain the saw and its safety equipment. Maintaining the saw in good condition and its safety devices not only keeps it ready for instant use, but prolongs the life of the saw as well. Don't try to repair the saw yourself. Take it to a trained chainsaw person.

DO:

- ~ Study the manufacturer's instructions thoroughly before you start.
- ~ Operate the saw in well-ventilated areas.
- ~Wear the proper protective equipment.
- ~Wait for the engine to cool down before re-fueling.

DON'T:

- ~Operate a saw that is in need of maintenance or repair.
- ~Saw near flammable liquids or gases.
- ~ Ever remove a chainsaw's safety equipment.

**REPLACE A SAW GUARD: IT'S EASIER THAN
REPLACING A FINGER!!**

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BE ALERT <> BE SAFE <> BE ALIVE

Ted Gordon- Risk Mgmt. /Loss Control Mgr.
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