

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Safety Tips:
Chainsaw Safety

Chainsaws are truly labor saving machines, and potentially are extremely dangerous, especially if the operator isn't familiar with the rules of safety in operating one.

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission reported that in 1999 there were 28,500 chainsaw injuries. More than 36% of these injuries were to the legs and knees.

- ✓ The average medical cost of chainsaw injuries in 1989 was said to be \$5,600. The average injury included 110 stitches. In the year of 2000 the cost had escalated to an average of \$12,000.
- ✓ Medical cost based on the number of injuries above is reported to be about \$350 million per year.
- ✓ Workman's compensation costs, based on the assumption of four weeks required recovery time, is estimated to be \$125 million annually.

As you look at these figures, it behooves chainsaw users to be extremely careful and to be totally familiar with all the workings of a chainsaw.

CHAINSAWS ARE DANGEROUS-

- ✓ Chainsaws can save you a lot of time and work, but also they can be very dangerous.
- ✓ Many chainsaw accidents happen because the operators don't understand the hazards accompanying the chainsaw and aren't totally familiar with the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ One of the biggest hazards of chainsaw use is the kickback. This occurs when the nose or tip of the guide bar comes in contact with an object such as a log, rock, or branch. The guide bar abruptly kicks up and back toward the operator – causing the operator to lose control of the saw.

BEFORE BEGINNING TO USE THE SAW-

- Before you start to saw, get familiar with all the parts and controls of the chainsaw that you will be using.
- Carefully review the manufacturer's manual. If you have a question about some part of the manual, ask your supervisor to clear up the question for you.
- Be sure that you are in good shape physically. If you feel a little puny or overly sick, report it to your supervisor.
- Check your clothing. Don't wear loose clothing, jewelry, or cuffed pants as they could become entangled in the saw. Tie long hair back.
- Wear the proper protective equipment which should include heavy duty gloves with a good grip, sturdy shoes or boots with non-skid soles, and head, eye, and hearing protection. You should also wear leather chaps to protect your legs.

DO:

- ✓ Carefully review the manufacturer's manual before using a chainsaw.
- ✓ Only operate a chainsaw in well-ventilated areas.
- ✓ Wear the proper personal protective equipment.

CHECK THE SURROUNDING AREA-

Make sure that:

- there are no animals or bystanders in the area where you'll be sawing.
- the ground is free of rocks, stumps, and wet or slippery brush.
- you can get firm footing on the ground.
- you know which way that the tree will fall, if you are felling a tree. Be sure to pre-plan a safe route of egress away from the path of the falling tree.

REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF A 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 that it doesn't come in contact with another object.
- Always cut below shoulder height and don't over reach.
- Saw with the engine on full throttle.
- Don't cut with the tip or nose of the guide bar.
- Stand slightly to the left of the guide bar-don't stand directly behind the saw.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS-

- Be sure that your saw is in good repair before you began a project. You should make an inspection each time before you start a project. Make sure that the chain is sharp and the tension on the chain tension is properly adjusted.
- Do not remove the chainsaw's safety equipment.
- Turn the engine off before you set the saw down or change locations.
- Refrain from cutting with the saw between your legs or straddling the limb that you will be cutting.
- Be alert to a springback when cutting a limb under tension. You could be struck by the tension of the limb or fibrous scrap from the limb.
- Keep the saw and its handles clean and dry.
- Wipe up spilled fuel and oil after refueling.
- Properly maintain the saw and its safety equipment.
- Don't attempt to repair your saw. Take it to a certified or trained service person.

DON'T:

- ✓ Operate a chainsaw that appears to be damaged or in disrepair.
- ✓ Saw near flammable liquids or gases.
- ✓ Ever remove a chainsaw's safety equipment.

*FLESH & BONE ARE NO MATCH FOR
A CHAINSAW BLADE!
MACHINE GUARDS KEEP YOU ON YOUR SIDE
<><><><>
ONE BAD DAY WITH A CHAINSAW
CAN RUIN YOUR WHOLE LIFE*