

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Pressure Washers

Yes, safety should be considered even when using a pressure washers. Pressure washer injuries are 100% avoidable if a few precautions are taken.

The most serious injury can occur from the high pressure water coming out of the washer's nozzle. Some nozzles are designed to blow paint off of concrete, so just imagine how easily it can do damage to your skin. **High pressure injection** injuries may at first appear minor. This may result in an injured person delaying treatment – putting himself or herself at increased risk for infection, disability or amputation. Pressure washers are not an endless water gun - avoid horseplay! Never point it at yourself or another person.

Avoid ladders and working at height when using a pressure washer. The **kickback** force can push you off the ladder and create unexpected movement at heights. Use an extension wand when possible.

Wear the appropriate **personal protective equipment** (PPE). Many injuries can be prevented with proper PPE.

- Safety glasses or goggles.
Proper safety glasses will prevent flying projectiles entering your eye. And when dealing with high pressure water spraying dirt and debris off surfaces, this is simple risk reduction that you need to do.
- Gloves.
The most common point of injection injuries is the hand. Wear proper safety gloves.
- Enclosed shoes.
At best you want to be wearing proper steel toe boots or work boots. At worst wear enclosed running shoes. Even though it's wet work & may be hot outside – no flip flops!

Pressure Washer Safety Tips:

- Read the User Manual front to back before operating the pressure washer. Each pressure washer is slightly different. There are not only gas and electric types but belt drive, direct drive, hot water and cold water.
- Is the weather today good for pressure washing? Power washing in the rain or heavy wind is not the safest.
- Be sure to wrap electrical in plastic, close windows and cover vents to prevent damage from the water spraying.
- Test the ground fault circuit interrupter before use.
- To help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, refrain from using a gas-powered system indoors or in enclosed, unventilated spaces.
- If you must use an extension cord, keep the washer's power cord connection out of standing water. Use a cord rated for use in wet environments.
- Wear appropriate PPE.
- If the washer trips a circuit breaker, have the machine inspected by an electrician.
- Start washing with the widest angle spray tip 2-foot from a test surface and adjust nozzle and distance as needed.
- Take precautions to avoid potential slippery walking areas, caused from the water used or grease & grime sprayed off.

For more info contact – Leslie Woolington
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Sources:
<http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/16154-pressure-washers-dangerous-when-misused>
<http://pressurewashr.com/pressure-washer-safety/>