



CHAINSAW SAFETY

Employers must train employees who use chainsaws to operate the saw safely. Review the *Owner's Manual* for each model saw that is used. This bulletin reviews important safety tips.

Hard hat/helmet

Faceshield or screen
with safety glasses

Ear muffs or ear plugs

Heavy-duty, non-slip gloves

Chainsaw protective chaps

Work Boots
(steel toe for
arborists and logger)



Stand to the side of the cut.
Avoid cutting above
shoulder height.

Allow the weight of the saw
to do the work. Do not put
pressure on the saw.

Two hands on saw at
all times.

Release the throttle and use
chain brake, or shut saw off
completely before carrying
the saw to a new location.

Keep foot area clear of
trip obstacles.

Worker training:

- Review each specific *Owner's Manual* and *Manufacturer's Safety Manual* for each model chainsaw you use.
- Demonstrate the kick back zone.
- Demonstrate stance to reduce injury from kickback and reaction forces.
- Demonstrate chain brake, clutch, and throttle.
- Tree cutting workers need to understand techniques to control fall zones and prevent tree limbs under tension from springing back towards workers.

Inspect chainsaw before use:

- Chain is sharp and tension adjusted so it is secure on the chain bar.
- Chain brake, clutch, and throttle operate as designed by manufacturer.
- Lubrication reservoir is full.
- Select rear-handled chainsaws for almost all tasks. Avoid top-handle chainsaw unless essential for task and used by a trained arborist in tree-climbing applications.

Prevent kickback:

- Plan for the reactive forces of the saw.
- No chainsaw is designed for one-handed use. Always keep two hands on the saw when chain is running. Never operate with one hand.
- Never use the upper tip of the chain to start a cut.
- Sharp chains prevent kickback. Keep spare chains or be prepared to sharpen the chain in the field.

Sample safety programs for municipal and state agencies are available at www.mass.gov/dols/wshp.