

CHAINSAW SAFETY

Whether clearing out dead trees, fallen trees and branches, or occasional operation, it is critical to use proper safety measures when operating a chainsaw. However, not everyone who is handed a saw is properly trained. According to the US Consumer Products Safety Commission, there are an estimated 30,955 chainsaw-related accidents each year. Chainsaws are powerful cutting machines that need to be operated with a high level of care. Learn how to protect yourself before using that chainsaw!

BEFORE STARTING A CHAINSAW:

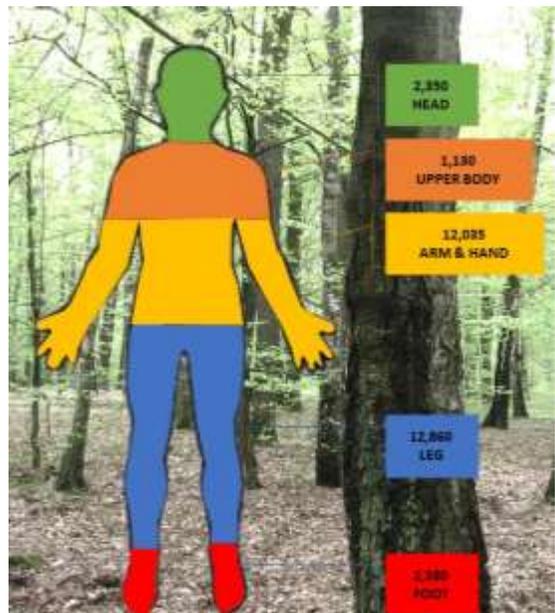
- Check controls, chain tension, bolts, handles for proper adjustment
- Ensure chain is sharp and lubrication reservoir is filled with manufacturer-recommended bar and chain oil
- Check the air filter
- Use an approved fuel container for transporting fuel
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any source of ignition
 - Do Not use fuel with ethanol
 - Do Not use fuel over one year old
 - Do Not Smoke while fueling
- Use a funnel or flexible hose to fill tank on chainsaw
- Do not fill a running or HOT chainsaw
- Check the environment. Look up, down and around. Plan for an escape route.

Wear proper personal protective equipment to further reduce the chance of injuries.

COVER BEFORE YOU CUT

Last year's chainsaw injuries occurred to the following areas of the body:

- 2,350 head injuries
- 1,130 upper body injuries
- 12,035 arm and hand injuries
- 12,860 leg injuries
- 2,580 foot injuries



June 2017 by Chris Padilla, Training Manager, NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, ND LTAP

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PROPER PPE IS CRITICAL IN REDUCING INJURIES



- Gloves
- Eye protection, including helmet with face shields
- Hearing protection
- Chaps or pants
- Should have rip stop and fibers that stop the chainsaw if contact is made
- Cut-retardant shirts
- Safety boots

CHAINSAW OPERATION:

- Start the chainsaw at least 10 feet away from fueling area
- Start with the chainsaw on the ground or other firm support. Drop starting is not safe and should not be done.
- Clear away dirt, debris, small trees, limbs and rocks away from the bar path
- Look for metal objects (nails, wire, spikes, etc) before cutting.
- In some cases, using a metal detector on the timber is recommended to identify any hidden metal objects
- Engage the chain brake or shut engine off when carrying the saw
- Keep hands on saw and maintain secure footing while operating.
- Do not wear loose clothing or loose jewelry
- Be aware of potential kick-back and do not saw with the tip
- Watch for branches under tension that may spring out when cut
- Be aware of cuts that may bind against the saw
- Never cut above your shoulders
- Position yourself in a stable, natural position when cutting



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- You should never cut above your head or in an awkward, unstable position
- Use good body positioning, like you are performing a deadlift or partial squat, avoid bending over causing a loss of your lumbar curve

After operating the chainsaw and saw has cooled, check the chain for damage, sharpness, tension and make necessary adjustments. Once completely cool, store in a protective case away from combustibles.

Practicing safe chainsaw operations will reduce related accidents, promote a safe work environment and extend the life of your equipment. Stay safe out there!

References:

<https://www.stihlusa.com/>

<https://www.osha.gov/>

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