

## 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:**

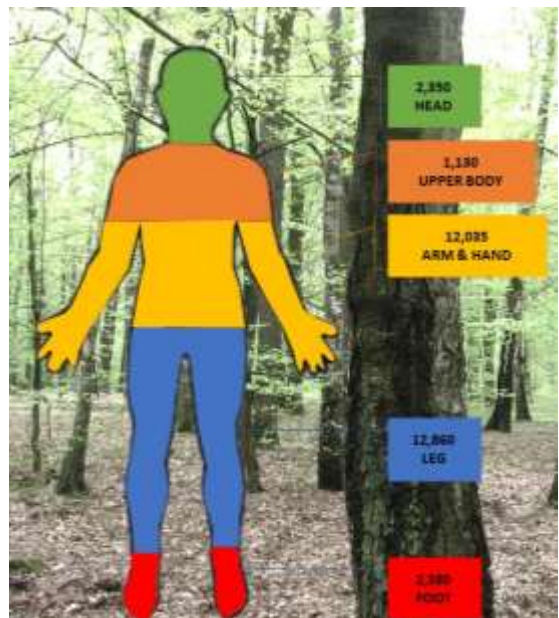
- Check controls, chain tension, bolts, handles for proper adjustment
- Ensure chain is sharp and lubrication reservoir is filled with manufacturer-recommended bar and chain oil
- Check the air filter
- Use an approved fuel container for transporting fuel
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any 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*

# SAFETY TALK



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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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