

SAFE USE OF CHAIN SAWS

Chain saws, although very useful, are among the most hazardous power tools used. The unguarded blade, difficult terrain upon which one must often work and stresses applied to the materials to be cut creates high potential hazards. The use of proper operating procedures, personal protective equipment, safeguards on saws and proper work planning and execution can greatly reduce these potential hazards. Below are some guidelines for chain saw use.

Before Operation

- Never work alone when using a chain saw.
- Only use a chain saw that is appropriately sized for the job.
- Read the safety manual for the chain saw.
- Know how to safely operate and maintain the chain saw. Chain saw operators need to be able to anticipate and avoid injury from the job-related hazards they may encounter. First aid and CPR training is also an OSHA requirement for chain saw operators.
- Prior to operation, check controls, chain tension, chain sharpness and all bolts and handles to ensure they are functioning properly and adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check bar and chain oil level when applicable.
- Fuel the saw at least 10 feet from sources of ignition.
- For refueling, only use metal or plastic fuel containers with less than a five-gallon capacity and approved by a National Recognized Testing Laboratory (UL, FM, etc.)
- Obtain, inspect and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including head, hearing, eye/face, leg foot and hand protection.
- Make a plan. Determine the appropriate cut method and fall direction. Note and avoid any sensitive infrastructure such as power lines and buildings. Plan a safe, unobstructed path of retreat before making a cut. Plan and make the cuts carefully.



During Operation

- Keep your hands on the handles and maintain secure footing while operating the chain saw.
- Maintain a clear retreat path.
- Do not cut directly overhead.
- Shut off or release the throttle prior to retreating.
- Shut off or engage the chain break whenever the saw is being carried.
- Be prepared for kickback.

After Operation

- Clean and store the chain saw in a secure place.
- Ensure the chain saw is cool before putting it into storage.
- Address any safety and maintenance issues.

Request training information by contacting safetytraining@yale.edu.