



Public Sector Safety Talks: APERMA

Operating a Chainsaw Safely



During the winter time, we occasionally will experience hazardous weather due to snow, ice, rain, wind, etc... The winter weather that occurs during this time of year may cause our road/maintenance and public works departments to have to clean up debris. If we must use chainsaws to assist us with cleaning up our roads, it is important to remember safety techniques when utilizing this equipment.

Hazards

- Exposure to mechanical hazards from the chain and other moving parts
- Kick-backs of the bar
- Being struck by falling objects
- Flying particles of dirt or debris, or other particles discharged from the bar
- Foreign objects in the eyes
- Repetitive motion injuries
- Noise and vibration exposure
- Exposure to exhaust gases such as carbon monoxide in poorly ventilated areas
- Burns from the exhaust system

Operating the Equipment

- Establish good, stable footing
- Make a plan for the work to be done and identify and establish controls for the hazards present
- Choose the correct sized saw for the job
- Assure that the saw is sharp, chain properly tensioned, and ready to operate before starting
- Use both hands to start the saw, one to hold the saw and the other to pull the cord.
- Make sure the safety features of the saw are in place and working, including a reduced kick-back bar, low kickback chain and chain brake
- Make sure rocks and other obstacles have been removed from cutting area
- Avoid contact between the bar tip and any object, or the dirt as it can result in a kick back and/or damage or dull the chain
- Hold the chainsaw firmly with both hands
- Don't cut above shoulder level
- Check the chain brake frequently
- Never cut when tired or alone
- Follow sharpening and maintenance instructions for the chainsaw
- Plan and clear an escape route when falling a tree, as the tree falls, stop motor, set the saw down and move quickly from the base of the tree rapidly at a 45 degree angle from the path of the fall
- Avoid making cuts with the saw between your legs
- Stand to the side of the limb you are cutting, don't straddle it
- Keep yourself and other people out of the cutting path in the event that the chain breaks
- Do not fuel hot or running equipment. Use a rag to wipe up fuel spills
- Before working in an area, the equipment operator must make sure the area is clear of people and other hazards

Please feel free to contact Jim Bergemann or Kathi Williams at 800-274-2788 with any questions regarding the above material.

"The information contained in this report was obtained from sources which to the best of the writer's knowledge are authentic and reliable. Arthur J. Gallagher makes no guarantee or results, and assumes no liability in connection with either the information herein contained, or the safety suggestions herein made. Moreover, it can not be assumed that every acceptable safety procedure is contained herein, or that an abnormal or unusual circumstances may not warrant or require further or additional procedures."