

# CHAIN SAW SAFETY



This talk discusses the hazards associated with using chain saws and explains safe work practices for preventing chain saw injuries.

## Materials to have on hand:

- Chain saws in use at the facility or jobsite
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for using chain saws

## Items for attendees to consider during talk:

- Do you know what chain saw kickback is and how to avoid it?
- What PPE should you wear when using a chain saw?

## TALK

Chain saws are a common tool at many outdoor worksites. However, they can be very hazardous and can cause serious injuries. If you work with chain saws, you need to be aware of these hazards so that you can take steps to protect yourself.

Before you use a chain saw, inspect it to make sure it's in good condition. Check the controls, chain tension, and all bolts and handles to make sure they're working properly and are adjusted according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Also, verify that the muffler, brakes, and shielding devices are in place and functioning as they should. Make sure that the

chain is sharp and the lubrication reservoir is full. If any part of the chain saw is damaged, do not use it.

Wear the following personal protective equipment, or PPE, whenever you use the saw, and check that your PPE is in good condition:

- Safety glasses to protect your eyes from flying debris
- Foot protection and hand protection
- Leg protection that covers the leg from the top of your thigh to the top of your boot
- A hard hat to protect yourself from falling and flying objects
- Hearing protection to prevent hearing loss from the loud noise of the saw

One hazard you need to be aware of when using a chain saw is the risk of kickback. Kickback can happen when the nose or tip of the saw strikes an object, and the chain is pinched or snagged. This can cause the blade tip to unexpectedly move upward and back toward you, which can cause serious injury. Kickback is one of the most common causes of chain saw accidents.

To avoid kickback, never use the tip of the saw to cut. Always hold the saw securely with both hands, and plan your cuts before you begin. Always be aware of where the nose of the bar is so you can prevent it from contacting surfaces. Don't stand directly

*Continued on page 2*

**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor/  
Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

# CHAIN SAW SAFETY

behind the saw but off to the side so that you are out of the primary danger zone.

Follow these do's and don'ts when using the chain saw:

- **DO** start the saw on the ground or another firm support, not in the air or on your knee.
- **DO** start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area.
- **DO** shut off the saw or set the chain brake when carrying it on rough or uneven surfaces, or when carrying it for more than 50 feet.
- **DO** keep your hands on the handles, and make sure your footing is secure while operating the chain saw.
- **DO** clear the area of obstacles where you are working before you begin.
- **DON'T** cut with a chain saw above shoulder height.

- **DON'T** wear loose clothing; jewelry; or loose, long hair when using a chain saw.

Refueling a chain saw presents its own set of hazards. Follow these safe practices:

- Only use approved containers to store and carry fuel for the chain saw. Containers must be metal or plastic and must not have a capacity greater than 5 gallons.
- Fuel at least 10 feet away from any sources of ignition.
- Never smoke while fueling.
- Always turn off the saw and let it cool completely before fueling.

Remember, chain saws can be very dangerous, but if you follow these safe practices, you can avoid injury.

