

Chainsaws and other trimming equipment can be valuable tools. However they can be extremely hazardous and present some very serious injury risks if used improperly.

Anytime that you are operating a chainsaw, always wear the appropriate PPE. This means approved eye and face protection as well as hearing, hand, leg and foot protection. You should also be aware that OSHA requires you to wear chaps whenever you operate a chainsaw at ground level. Having the appropriate attire is crucial in preventing and minimizing the severity of injuries.



Prior to using a chainsaw, you should be properly trained to do so. When starting a chainsaw, place it on the ground or against a solid support. Avoid drop starting the chainsaw unless you are working from a bucket truck.

Before each use, inspect the immediate work and/or cutting area. Clear away any brush that may interfere with you or your work and/or cutting area if necessary.

When using a chainsaw, always use both hands throughout the cutting operation. Make sure that the saw bumper is set against the tree or limb before initiating a cut. Never use a chainsaw above shoulder level and do not approach anyone while they are using a chainsaw.

Nearly all chainsaws have what is known as “dead man” controls. “Dead man” controls keep the chainsaw from locking in the “on” position by turning the saw off when the switch is released. Make sure that the chainsaw is not on or running when working on any part of the chain or cutting bar and never move a chainsaw while it is on. You should also never leave a running chainsaw unattended.

You should allow gas operated chainsaws time to cool before refueling. If you spill gas on the device during fueling, wipe the chainsaw clean before starting it and resuming work. Never use gas operated chainsaws indoors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What type of PPE should be worn when using a chainsaw?

When is it safe to drop start a chainsaw?

What do “dead man” controls do?

What should you do if you spill gas on a chainsaw when refueling?