



**Cherie Berry**  
Commissioner of Labor

*Operating a chain saw is inherently hazardous. Potential injuries can be minimized by using proper personal protective equipment and safe operating procedures.*

### **Before Starting a Chain Saw**

- Check controls, chain tension, and all bolts and handles to ensure that they are functioning properly and are adjusted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure the chain is always sharp and the lubrication reservoir is full.
- Start the saw on the ground or another firm support. Never drop start a chain saw. Drop starting is extremely dangerous.
- Start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area, with the chain's brake engaged.

### **Fueling a Chain Saw**

- Use approved containers for transporting fuel to the saw.
- Dispense fuel at least 10 feet away from any sources of ignition when performing construction activities. Do not smoke during fueling.
- Use a funnel or a flexible hose when fueling the saw.
- Never attempt to fuel a running or HOT saw.

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### **Chain Saw Safety**

- Clear away dirt, debris, small tree limbs and rocks from the saw's chain path. Look for nails, spikes or other metal in the tree before cutting.
- Shut off the saw or engage its chain brake when carrying the saw on rough or uneven terrain.
- Keep your hands on the saw's handles, and maintain secure footing while operating the saw.
- When operating the saw, wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, which includes hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Be careful that the trunk or tree limbs will not bind against the saw.
- Watch for branches under tension; they may spring out when cut.
- Gasoline-powered chain saws must be equipped with a protective device that minimizes chain saw kickback.
- Be cautious of saw kickback. To avoid kickback, do not saw with the tip. If equipped, keep tip guard in place.

*Adapted from OSHA Quick Card 3269-10N-05, U.S. Department of Labor.*

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