



## **Chain Saw Fact Sheet**

### **What is a chain saw?**

The chain saw is one of the most efficient and productive portable power tools used in industry. It can also be one of the most dangerous. If you learn to operate it properly and maintain the saw in good working condition, you can avoid injury as well as be more productive.

### **What are the hazards associated with a chain saw?**

Chain saws operate at very high speeds with very sharp cutting links, with no protective shields or guards. Cuts are the primary hazard and can be severe or even life threatening. Even when a chain saw is not running, accidental contact with the chain can result in cuts. In addition to cuts, eye injuries can occur from flying chips and debris, and hearing loss can occur from the noise generated by the saw.

### **What should I know before using a chain saw?**

It is extremely important to read your operators manual. This will provide details of safe operating procedures, maintenance and repair of the saw. If you do not have the manual, contact the saw manufacturer for another copy.

### **What should I do to protect myself?**

A chain saw operator must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize the hazards associated with using a chain saw. The careful operator of a chain saw will always use a hard hat, hearing protection and eye/face protection, gloves, heavy leather work boots, and cut-resistant pants or chaps designed for chain saw operation.

In addition to using PPE:

- Avoid touching any object with the tip of the saw to avoid a “kickback,” which often results in injury to the operator.
- Keep the saw clean, the chain sharp and the motor operating smoothly.
- Learn how to and always use the chain brake device. See the operators manual for details.
- Never “drop start” a chain saw. See the operators manual for proper starting techniques.
- Never put fuel into a hot chain saw.

### **Are there occupational safety and health standards for chain saws?**

No, there are no OSH standards specific to chain saws. However, employers have a general duty to address workplace hazards that can cause serious physical harm or death.

### **Where can I find additional information?**

Please review our Quick Cards on our [publications page](#). The NCDOL Library also has available [chain saw videos](#) listed under the “Groundskeeping/Landscaping/Maintenance” heading under video/DVD titles.