

No. 5 Chainsaw Safety

Chainsaw Safety Information

The information in this note has been prepared to raise awareness of the potential injuries and hazards associated with the use of a chainsaw for general cross-cutting activities. Chainsaw users are encouraged to pursue training in this area through an accredited training organisation.

General safety precautions

- Read the owners manual for your chainsaw model. It will tell you the safety features for your chainsaw and the correct way of operating it.
- Check your chainsaw thoroughly before use. Make sure your chain and sprocket are in good condition and that all safety devices are operating correctly. If you are not sure, take it to a service agent.
- Always wear suitable protective clothing (see below).
- Keep other people and animals away from the work area. Do not become distracted. Stop the chainsaw if somebody starts speaking to you.
- If tired, take a rest. Chainsaw operation requires constant attention and tired operators have more accidents.

Regularly:

- Sharpen your saw chain;
- Check the guide bar for burring; and
- Service your chainsaw.

Before you start cutting, check that:

- The machine is in good repair (no wear, damage or leaks);
- The chain brake is working
- The throttle trigger, safety throttle lock and stop switch work correctly;
- The chain is lubricated, sharp and tension is correct; and
- The carburettor idle is adjusted correctly.

After using your chainsaw:

- Clean the chainsaw (particularly the air filter, cooling inlets and sprocket cover).

Preventing hearing loss

- Most chainsaws emit noise levels that can cause permanent damage to your hearing if used for long periods at a time.
- Always use Australian Safety standards approved earmuffs or plugs.
- Ensure your muffler is in good condition.
- Ensure your engine is tuned to manufacturer specifications.



Preventing exhaust poisoning

- The exhaust gasses from your chainsaw contain poisonous elements such as carbon monoxide.
- Ensure your muffler is in good condition.
- Do not work in confined spaces.

Preventing fires



- Refuel in an area clear of flammable material.
- Refuel the chainsaw only after the engine has been turned off and allowed to cool down.
- Do not smoke while operating or filling the chainsaw.
- Move at least 3 metres away from the refuelling area before starting.
- Make sure caps are screwed on tightly and any fuel spillage is wiped off.
- Only use safety approved fuel containers.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or knapsack nearby when fire restrictions are in force or there is a reasonable chance of a fire starting.

Personal safety equipment



Approved safety helmets with visor or goggles, earmuffs, protective leggings, steel capped safety boots and gloves should be worn to protect you from chainsaw injury.

Chainsaw Safety

Using your chainsaw

- Do not operate your chainsaw with the throttle lock engaged. Engine speed cannot be controlled with the throttle trigger in this position.
- Always hold your chainsaw firmly with both hands.

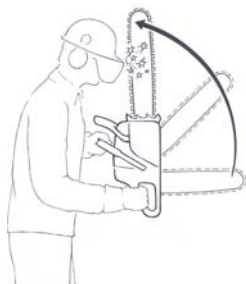


- Position your chainsaw so that your body is clear of the cutting bar.
- Make sure your chainsaw does not touch any foreign materials. Stones, nails etc. may be flung off, damage the saw chain or cause the saw to kick back unexpectedly.
- Take special care when cutting shatter wood - sharp slithers of wood may be caught and flung in your direction.
- If on a slope, stand on the uphill side or to one side of the log. Watch out for rolling logs.



Preventing kickback

Kickback occurs when the chainsaw bar is flung upwards uncontrollably during crosscutting, usually striking the operator in the head at speed **causing serious injury or death**. This is caused by the chain on the top quarter of the nose bar, hitting a solid object or being pinched during sawing. The force of the chain (travelling at up to 60kph at full throttle) flings the tip of the bar in an arc at the operator **quicker than the operator can react**.

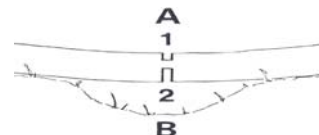


To prevent injury from kickback:

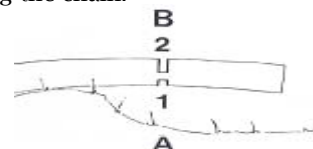
- Ensure your machine is fitted with a chain brake (preferably inertia activated);
- Ensure the brake mechanism is clean and operates effectively;
- Use low kick back type chain and avoid lowering the depth gauges too much when sharpening;
- Hold the chainsaw firmly, making sure the left hand encircles the top handle with the thumb underneath;
- Avoid bringing the upper quadrant of the guide bar into contact with any foreign object;
- Do not cut above shoulder height; and
- Always begin your cut at peak revs.

Logs under tension

- Always start first cut (1) on the compression side to a third of the diameter, then perform the second cut (2) at the tension side - otherwise the saw will become jammed.



- For logs touching the ground cut three quarters of the way through the log then roll over to complete the cut - this will avoid damaging the chain.



Key references

- Standards Australia AS2727 Chainsaw - Guide to safe working practices.
- Your own chainsaw operator's manual.

Diagrams provided by *Stihl*®.

Further information

If you require any further information please call the Department of Sustainability and Environment Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Visit DSE's website

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

then select Forests/Regional Information/Bendigo

The advice provided in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Always read the label before using any of the products mentioned.

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