

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Pressure Washer Safety



As pressure washers have become more popular and more accessible, their use has become more popular.

As is second nature with any new or existing equipment, we need to get familiar with the owner's manual and the safety instructions that are involved. There are always risks involved when using equipment, but getting familiar with the instruction manual and trying to avoid risks that we shall discuss below will greatly reduce these potentials:

- The pressure washer "is what it is" and the stream of water that it generates can puncture your skin very quickly. The wounds may not seem to be too critical on the front end, but ultimately they can cause a serious risk of infection, disability or amputation.
- The strong spray can throw objects that will strike and injure others that may be standing close by.
- An electrical shock can occur if the washer isn't used properly and if proper safety instructions aren't followed.
- Pressure washers being driven by gasoline engines can present the potential for carbon monoxide. Be sure to use the machine in well ventilated areas and not in enclosed buildings.
- Always use the washer on stable surfaces with a slight slope for drainage.
- Do not turn the machine on without connecting the water supply. Failure to do this will damage the pump.
- Always keep the hose connected to the pump and to the spray gun while the gun is pressurized.

FIRST AID TIPS:

- Call 911 if emergency help is needed.
- Before treating any wound, wash your hands with soap and clean water.
- Remove objects or obstacles that might hinder caring for the wound.

**SAFETY IS A STATE OF MIND -
ACCIDENTS ARE AN ABSENCE
OF MIND!**

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**SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S  
RESPONSIBILITY!!**

- Put pressure on the wound with a clean cloth to stop the bleeding.
- After the bleeding has stopped, pour bottled or clean water over the wound.
- Gently clean around the wound with soap and clean water.
- Pat it dry and apply an adhesive bandage or clean dry cloth to cover the wound.
- Leave any unclean wounds uncovered.

### **SAFETY TIPS WHILE USING A PRESSURE WASHER:**

- Use a solid stance, feet flat on the surface and grasp the spray nozzle firmly with both hands. By doing this, you can avoid a kickback from the gun if you were to drop it or lose control of the washer hose.
- Take extra caution when spraying next to power lines, electric meters or service feeds.
- Do not secure the spray gun in the open position.
- Do not ever change spraying pattern or spraying tip while spraying.
- None of the owners' instruction manuals recommend spraying from a ladder. It is too easy to fall from a burst of pressure with a slip or a fall.

### **OTHER SAFETY TIPS FOR PERSONAL HELP:**

- Never aim the nozzle at people or animals. As mentioned earlier in the article, the stream is high pressure and can pierce the skin of humans or animals, causing serious injuries.
- Do not leave the pressure washer running unattended. Do not allow children to operate the washer.
- Always wear eye protection when operating a pressure washer; also, if you are standing in the area where one is being used, you should use eye protection as well. The stream is under high pressure, as the unit is called, and can cause paint to chip and become a missile.
- After each use, be sure to squeeze the nozzle handle to relieve the pressure in the nozzle, hose and the pump.
- Do not wear sandals or open-toed shoes when using the washer.
- It is always good to use rubber sole shoes or boots, which will provide some insulation while washing.

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Excerpts: [www.cdc.gov/nasd](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd) 4/21/08