

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips: Working
with Chainsaws*

Chainsaws can save you a lot of work compared to manual saws. They also can be very dangerous. Many chainsaw accidents happen because the operator takes the potential hazards too lightly and they probably fail to fully read and comprehend the instructions in the owner's manual.

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission states:

- 1999 – There were 28,500 injuries with an estimate of 36% of these occurring to the legs and knees.
- Medical cost for chainsaw injuries, based on the above numbers, total approx. \$350 million dollar per year.
- Workmen's Compensation costs, based on the assumption of a four week recovery period, can be estimated at \$125 million per year.

One of the biggest hazards of chainsaws is kickback. This happens when the nose or tip of the guide bar comes into contact with an object such as a rock, log, or branch. The guide bar instantly kicks up and back toward the operator – causing the operator to lose control of the saw.

Before you begin a sawing project-

- ✓ Carefully read the manufacturer's instruction manual, and if there are items you don't understand, ask your supervisor for help.
- ✓ After reading the owner's manual, get familiar with all the operating and safety features of the saw.
- ✓ Be sure that you are in good physical condition. If you feel tired or not up to strenuous work, talk to your supervisor.
- ✓ Don't operate a chainsaw with loose clothing. It's not impossible that you might catch loose clothing on a snag, branch, or the saw itself.
- ✓ Wear protective clothing – leather- palmed gloves, eye protection, earplugs or ear muffs, chainsaw chaps and boots with non-slip soles.

Check the area around you-

Make sure that:

- ✓ No people or animals in the area that you will be working in.
- ✓ The ground area is clean, no rock, cans, limbs, or holes or wet depressions.
- ✓ The ground is firm enough to maintain solid footing.
- ✓ You know which direction the tree will fall and plan yourself an escape route, just in case.

Reduce the chance of kickback-

Kickback is one of the biggest hazards in chainsaw use, as we mentioned earlier:

- ✓ Get a firm grip on the saw with both hands and plant your feet flat and firmly on the ground.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the tip of the guide bar to make sure that it doesn't come into contact with another object.
- ✓ Saw below shoulder height, and don't over reach.
- ✓ Saw with the engine on full throttle.
- ✓ Don't cut with the nose or tip of the guide bar.
- ✓ Stand slightly to the side of the guide bar - not directly behind the saw.

Other safety tips-

- Be sure that the saw is always in good repair. Always keep a sharp chain and proper chain adjustment.
- Don't remove the chain's safety equipment.
- Turn the saw off before setting it down or carrying it.
- Don't cut with the saw between your legs or straddle the limb that you are cutting.
- Be alert for spring back when cutting a limb under tension so you aren't struck when the tension in the wood fibers is released.
- Keep the saw handles clean and dry.
- Clean up oil spills and run overs from refueling.
- Don't attempt to repair chainsaws. Take it to a professional mechanic.
- Don't saw near flammable liquids or gasses.
- Don't use a saw under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

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PREVENT THE WORST!!!**

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