



**CHAIN SAWS**  
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Chain saws are a useful piece of equipment, but present hazards that can cause cuts, bruises, and strains. There also is the danger of fire.

### **Review Instructions**

Before attempting to operate a chain saw, or any other power equipment, thoroughly review the manufacturer's instructions on operation and maintenance. If these aren't available, be sure to get thorough instructions elsewhere.

### **Wear Personal Protection**

Wear snug fitting clothes, and be sure you're not wearing any jewelry that can get caught in the chain. When working in areas where there may be falling objects, wear a hard hat. Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from twigs, sawdust, and flying wood chips. Also wear safety shoes to protect your feet in case you drop the saw or a heavy log on them. Chain saws are noisy tools, so always wear hearing protection.

### **Before Starting**

Check the saw for loose fittings, proper chain sharpness and tension, loose spark plug, dirty air filter, frayed or worn starting cord, or a missing or defective muffler. The chain saw will do the best job for you only if it's properly maintained. A few minutes checking the saw and correcting any defective condition is time well spent. Of course, there are some repairs that are best left to someone experienced in fixing chain saws.

### **Fueling**

Most chain saws are powered by a two-cycle engine, which requires an oil-gasoline mixture. Follow the manufacturer's mixing instructions. Use only approved safety containers for fuel. Don't allow smoking and open flames where fuel is stored or handled or while maintaining or operating the saw. Remove any fuel or oil spills from the saw before starting. Give the saw a chance to cool off before refueling. Cylinders and mufflers can get hot enough to ignite gasoline if it comes in contact with them. Start the saw away from the fueling area. Do not start the saw if there is spilled fuel on it.

## **Operation**

Check the area to be sure all bystanders are clear of the cutting site. Check the material to be cut for nails or wire imbedded in it. Plan a path of retreat away from the line of fall, so you can safely and quickly move out of the way. Hold the saw firmly and away from your body and other obstructions before starting. Don't allow the chain to touch anything. The best way to control the saw is by keeping a firm two-handed grip on the handles.

## **Cutting Hints**

Avoid cutting wood directly overhead or at distances away from you that would require you to give up safe control of the saw. If possible, stand on the opposite side of the tree trunk when trimming felled timber. Then if the saw slips, you have the trunk between you and the saw. Sometimes branches are under tension. Check for this and position yourself so you won't be stuck. Take care to prevent pinching the guide bar and saw chain. If the saw becomes bound, shut it off. It is preferable to use wooden wedges instead of metal ones to free the saw, since they minimize damage to the guide bar and chain.

Check for overhead power lines and make sure when the tree falls it won't hit them.

When the tree is ready to fall, idle the saw and call "timber-r-r" even if you don't think anyone else is in the area. Play it safe – that's the smart way! As the tree begins to fall, shut off the saw and follow your safest path of retreat. Watch for rebound of the tree butt. In an emergency, consider your own safety above that of the saw or other equipment.

## **You'll Learn by Experience**

There are many "ins and outs" we haven't discussed about chain saws that can be gained only by experience. We have covered the basic "common sense" precautions you should take whether you are using a chain saw at work or at home. If you follow this advice, you'll get the job done quickly, easily, and, more importantly, with a lessened chance of having an accident.

