

Chainsaw Safety Tips

Chainsaws are great machines for tree surgeons and anyone wishing to cut down trees or chop wood. Using a chainsaw, you can have the job completed within a matter of seconds, compared to traditional methods such as an axe. But, just like any forms of cutting apparatus, these machines can be highly dangerous when used incorrectly. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the United Kingdom, there have been 5 deaths and many serious injuries within recent years due to chainsaws. This is not a statistic that should put you off from using one, but it is important to remember that these powerful machines can cause serious harm. Although, you don't have to partake a training course to handle a chainsaw at home (work may differ), it is important to consider some basic chainsaw safety tips before you start using your chainsaw to make firewood.

Acquiring Appropriate Apparel

First thing you will need to start cutting is to make sure you have all the required apparel needed. You should ideally wear a pair of workman's trousers that come with anti-clog protection. Some trousers come with braces, but these are optional. Just make sure you aren't wearing anything that feels restrictive and does not allow free movement, such as skinny jeans.

Gloves

You should always wear gloves when using a chainsaw to protect your hands from potential accidents. Now, don't get confused, gloves won't prevent stop your fingers from being chopped off, however, some gloves do offer some form of cut-resistance. This means that any short incidental contact with your chainsaw won't harm you. Gloves are also designed to protect your hands from constant vibration as well as allowing you to have a firm grip on the chainsaw, even if your hands are sweating profusely.

Protecting your face, eyes and ears

Make sure to also keep your eyes protected with a face guard or goggles, as there is potential for debris to fly into your face or eyes. You should consider wearing a hard hat too, especially if you are working in a forest or an area with a high potential of falling timber. Also, be sure to wear some form of ear protection, as chainsaws can emit large amounts of noise, so protect your hearing with some ear buds.

Footwear

Lastly in regards to clothing, be sure to wear suitable footwear. Wear shoes or boots that have plenty of grip and that won't allow you to slip. You may want to invest in a pair of steel-cap boots, especially if you are dealing with heavy logs.

Stand Well Away From Animals and Children

Next thing to consider is that any pets, animals and children are more than a safe distance away at all times during the procedure. You do not want a dog running around and barking at you whilst you are trying to concentrate cutting. Once you are sure that there isn't anyone or anything around that could put your life or even theirs at risk, then start to clear your work area by removing any excess leaves, rubbish, etc. In order for you to have a safe, clean and clear environment so that you can safely place your chain on the ground as well as not having anything that could interfere with the chainsaw during operation.

Safety Checks

Before you start any chainsaw job, you should carry out these three basic checks:

- Check if the chain brake is working correctly
- Make sure the blades are sharp enough to cut
- Check the chain tension

The reason why a sharp chain is important is because it is easier to cut with a sharp chain blade, rather than using a blunt one.

To sharpen the blade, you can either use a sharpening stone, or a file. See the manufacturer's guidelines before purchasing. To increase the chain tension, use the tension lock port to increase to an amount where the chain springs comfortably back when pulled.

Checking the brake is vitally important. Think of it like the brakes on your car or bike, without it, you would find stopping very difficult which could cause an accident.

Best Cutting Practices

When cutting, make sure you aren't cutting into the ground, as this can blunt the blade. Be sure that what you are cutting is on a flat and solid surface. It is easier to cut something that is not on the ground as this requires bending down or kneeling. The ideal stance you want to have when cutting is to have both legs shoulder width apart with one leg in front of the other and with a slight bend in the knees. It is important to never stand directly behind the chainsaw. During the cut, be sure to not allow the tip of the chainsaw to come in contact with the object you are cutting as this will cause it to kickback which could result in serious injury. The safest part of the chain to cut with is the blade that is closest to the engine.

JoshLister.com

Starting the Chainsaw

To start the chainsaw, the best way is to lay it on the ground, place your front hand on the ripcord, and your rear hand on the throttle and your rear foot within the handle, and then pull upwards as hard you can.

Conclusion

Remember, chainsaws are extremely dangerous and can cause serious harm to yourself and to others, so don't disregard your health and safety just to save time. Always wear the correct apparel, make sure your surroundings are clear and safe, you know how to use your chainsaw and that it is working without any issues and that you are working in plenty of light.