



General Chainsaw Safety

West Virginia University
Environmental Health and Safety



Pre-Use Activities

- Review and understand information provided in the chainsaw operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Inspect the chainsaw, including checking lubrication, chain tension, drive sprocket, guide bar, oil and air filters, and for electric chain saws, inspect the electrical cord and plug.
- If a chainsaw fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the chainsaw from service by attaching a red tag that states "OUT OF SERVICE". Complete red tag with appropriate information.



Operating Precautions

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including hard hat, safety glasses with side shields, ear plugs, gloves, steel-toed boots, and if available, protective chaps.
- Start the chainsaw on the ground. Never drop start or start a chainsaw on your knee.
- Chainsaws are designed to be run at full throttle.
- Do not operate a chainsaw when tired or taking prescriptive medicine.
- Cut while standing to the side and out of the plane of the chain and guide bar.
- Keep legs and feet from under the chainsaw.
- Chainsaws are not designed to cut anything other than wood. Do not cut near wire fences or into wood that contains nails or other metal objects.
- Do not overreach or cut wood above shoulder height and never use a chainsaw from a ladder or tree.
- Prevent kickback by never letting the nose of the guide bar (i.e. saw tip) contact wood surfaces and by making sure your cutting area is free from obstructions.
 - Before refueling, allow the saw engine to cool.
 - Transport chainsaws with the engine stopped and the chain and guide bar pointed backwards.

