

Chain Saw Safety

- ◆ Know your saw and how to operate it before you use it. Read and understand the operator's manual.
- ◆ Be sure the chain saw is in good working order. The saw should be sharp and the chain should fit snugly but not be too tight. Make sure all the nuts and screws are tight and all parts are well lubricated. Do not use a saw that doesn't have a working safety mechanism.
- ◆ Fuel the saw in a safe place. Wipe any spilled fuel from the saw before starting the engine.
- ◆ Fill a gas-powered chain saw only when the engine is cool. If the saw runs out of gas, let it cool 30 minutes before refueling.
- ◆ Clear the area of other debris before beginning to saw limbs or trees.
- ◆ Wear sturdy, snug-fitting clothing that gives you freedom of movement. Do not wear anything loose that could catch in the moving chain. Tie back long hair.
- ◆ Wear protective gear, including sturdy, nonslip gloves; high-top boots with nonslip soles (and preferably with steel toes); and a hard hat with face and hearing protection.
- ◆ Before starting the engine, make sure the chain is not contacting anything. Never let the saw rest on your leg or knee when starting the engine.
- ◆ Shut off the motor when you are not using the saw, even if you are moving only a few feet.
- ◆ Always work with a buddy, but never allow someone else to hold the wood while you cut.
- ◆ When sawing down a tree, first determine the direction it will fall. Do not allow trees to fall into other tree branches. Make sure no broken limbs or other trees are caught in the tree you want to cut. Plan an escape route in case the tree jumps off the stump when it is cut. Leave medium-size to large trees to professionals.
- ◆ Make sure you have secure footing. If the ground is slippery from rain or steeply sloping, do not cut there.
- ◆ Do not work from a ladder or climb into a tree.
- ◆ Do not work near electric power lines. Leave extensive pruning around power lines to the power company.
- ◆ Be alert at all times. Remember that with the saw running you won't be able to hear someone calling to you.
- ◆ **Kickback is one of the greatest hazards of using a chain saw.** Make sure the saw has an anti-kickback device. To lessen this hazard:
 - Always hold the saw firmly with both hands and keep the left arm as straight and stable as possible.
 - Use a saw equipped with a chain brake or other anti-kickback device.
 - Watch for twigs that can snag the chain.
 - Cut with the lower part of the saw blade, not the tip or nose.
 - Maintain a high saw speed when entering, cutting, and leaving the wood cut.
 - Do not cut above mid-chest height.
 - Do not cut brush or shrubbery.
- ◆ Always shut off the engine before setting down the chain saw, even when you are re-treating from a falling tree.

