

Work Safely With Chain Saws

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Carefully read the manufacturer's instructions before you use a chain saw.
- Always wear protective equipment.
- Be on the alert for kickback when you are sawing.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Bring to your training session the types of chain saws used in your operation. Also bring samples of the protective clothing/equipment used for chain saw work.

Chain saws can be dangerous

- Chain saws can save you a lot of time and work. But they are potentially dangerous.
- Many chain saw accidents happen because users don't understand the saw's hazards, or don't carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- One of the biggest hazards of chain saws is kickback. This often occurs 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 abruptly kicks up and back toward the operator – causing the person to lose control of the saw.

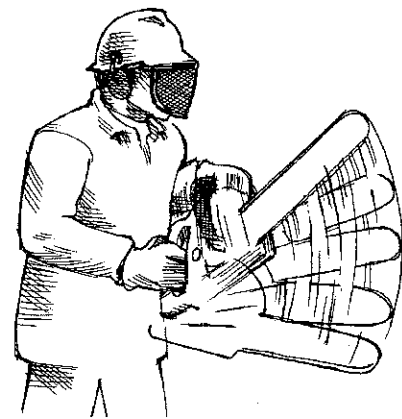
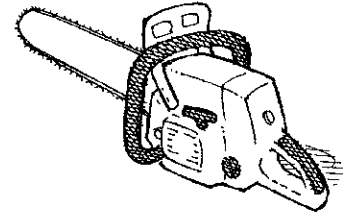
Before you begin the job

- Become familiar with the chain saw you will be using and its safety features.
- These are the chain saws we use here.

Note to trainer: Show trainees the chain saws used in your operation and point out their safety features.

- Carefully review the manufacturer's instructions. If you don't understand them, talk to your supervisor.
- Be sure you are in good physical condition. If you are overtired or for any other reason feel you can't do strenuous work, see your supervisor.
- Check your clothing. Don't operate a chain saw while wearing loose fitting clothing, jewelry, a scarf, cuffed pants or anything else that could become entangled in the saw. Tie long hair back.
- Wear the proper protective equipment. This should include heavy duty gloves with a good grip; sturdy shoes or boots with nonslip soles; head, eye and hearing protection; and leg protection such as chain saw chaps.

Note to trainer: Show trainees the protective equipment you provide.



(Continued on back)

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Work Safely With Chain Saws

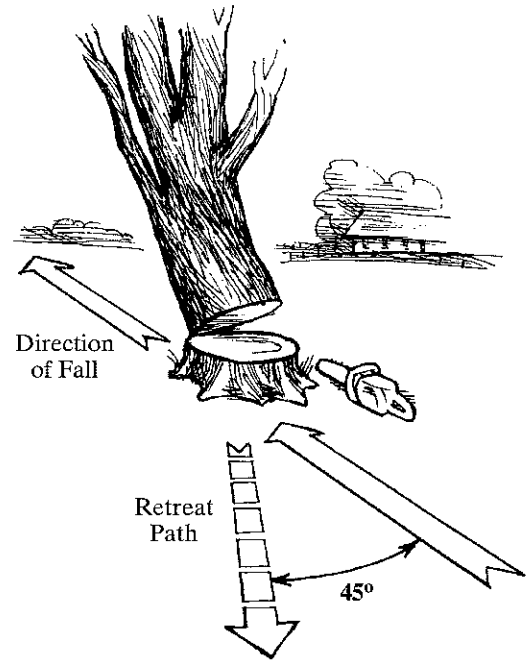
Check the area around you

Make sure that:

- there are no people or animals in the immediate area
- the ground is free of obstacles such as rocks, stumps, holes, and wet or otherwise slippery brush
- you can get a firm footing on the ground
- you know which way the tree will fall if you are felling a tree, and you have a safe way out of the area

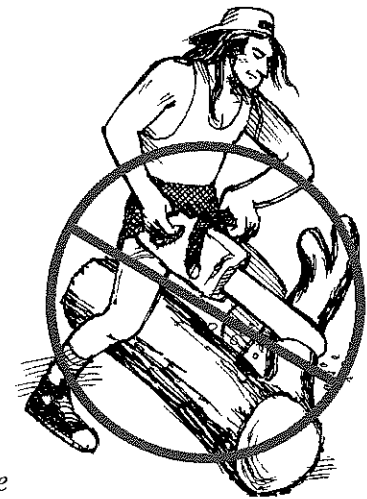
Reduce the chances of kickback

1. Get a firm grip on the saw with both hands and plant both feet firmly on the ground.
2. Keep an eye on the tip of the guide bar to make sure it doesn't come into contact with another object.
3. Saw below shoulder height, and don't overreach.
4. Saw with the engine on full throttle.
5. Don't cut with the nose or tip of the guide bar.
6. Stand slightly to the left of the guide bar – not directly behind the saw.



Other safety tips

- Be sure your saw is in good working condition at all times. The chain should be sharp and the tension properly adjusted.
- Don't remove the chain saw's safety equipment.
- Turn the engine off before you put your saw down or carry it.
- Don't cut with the saw between your legs or straddle the limb you will be cutting.
- Be alert for springback when cutting a limb under tension so you aren't struck when the tension in the wood fibers is released.
- Keep the saw and its handles clean and dry.
- Wipe up spilled fuel and oil after refueling.
- Properly maintain the saw and its safety equipment.
- Don't try to repair a chain saw yourself. It takes trained chain saw service personnel.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Chain Saw Safety Do's and Don'ts.

CHAIN SAW SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Carefully review the manufacturer's instructions before using a chain saw.
- Only operate a chain saw in well-ventilated areas.
- Wear the proper protective equipment.

DON'T:

- Operate a chain saw that appears damaged or in disrepair.
- Saw near flammable liquids or gasses.
- Ever remove a chain saw's safety equipment.

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