

Five Essential Pre-operating Safety Checks for Chainsaws

By: Brian Sauvageau, Occupational Safety and Health Officer

As spring arrives outdoor tree work and chainsaw operations become more frequent. Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic employers may want to take advantage of low traffic volumes, unoccupied facilities and grounds to perform needed or deferred tree maintenance, brush work, and tick habitat control. These times may also present opportunities to occupy idle personnel outdoors.

The chainsaw is likely the most powerful and dangerous hand held portable power tool in use within an employer's general industry. Employers must ensure that employees operating chainsaws are trained on safe operation and have read and understood the operating manuals. The operator should wear the correct and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) previously determined by the employer's workplace hazard assessments. PPE selection for this outdoor work should also include tick-bite prevention. Each employee operating chainsaws must know and practice five essential pre-operating safety checks:

1. Visually inspect the surfaces of the equipment for structural damage and defects such as fuel leaks, excessive oil, excessively dirty, clogged vents, and missing parts.
2. Check that the continuous pressure throttle control system functions properly by pressing the palm down on the handle releasing the safety trigger lock. These parts can become sticky and gummed up from dust and oils. They must move freely and spring back with the trigger locked in position.
3. Check the chain tension and adjust as needed. Check for sharpness, excessive wear, twists, missing teeth, and excessive metal filings coming from the bar channel.

4. Check that the chain brake works; that the hand lever is not damaged, and that it locks the chain by pulling on the chain by hand along the bar. (After starting the saw you should check the brake operation under power)

5. Check that the chain catcher is in place and that it is not torn off, bent, or twisted out of alignment. Finding damaged chain catchers indicates that a previous operator threw the chain and did not take the saw out of service for repair. Chain throws are dangerous and can be an indication of incorrect operation of the saw. The chain catcher is the soft alloy replacement device attached at a ninety degree 90° angle from the chain bar, just below the drive sprocket. Larger power heads are fitted with a rolling pin. In the event of a high speed chain throw, the chain catcher halts the chains momentum. This can prevent chain whip and laceration injuries.

These five safety checks must be performed at the beginning of each operating period. Monitor chain tension and adjustments during heavy use and at least at each refueling. Any chainsaw that does not pass either one of these five inspection points shall be immediately removed from service for corrections, repairs, or replacement.

During the course of CONN-OSHA site visits all chainsaws within the workplace are subject to inspection. Compliance with CONN-OSHA standards 1910.242(a) "Hand and portable power tools and equipment, general requirements," and Standards 1910.266 "Logging Operations" would be reviewed. Should the compliance officer establish employee exposures to unsafe use and operation of chainsaws, citations for apparent violations of these standards may be proposed.

COVID-19 continues to be a vital health and safety concern for Connecticut's workplaces.

For the most recent advice on worker protection regulations and guidance, please review:

[The CDC's Coronavirus Disease webpage](#)

[OSHA's COVID-19 Resources webpage](#)



Annual OSHA National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls Postponed

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced today that it has postponed the 7th annual National Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction, originally scheduled for May 4-8, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will be rescheduled this summer.

Falls remain the leading cause of fatal injuries to workers in the construction industry. While the National Stand-Down is postponed, OSHA encourages employers to remain vigilant and to use all available resources to enhance worker safety, including those at www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

The mission of the Department of Labor is to foster, promote and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights.

TICK-BORNE DISEASES

Recommendations for Employers

Employers should protect their workers from tick-borne diseases by taking these steps. Provide training for workers discussing the following:

- How tick-borne diseases are spread.
- The risks of exposure and infection.
- How workers can protect themselves from ticks.
- The importance of reporting of workplace illnesses and injuries.
- Recommend that workers wear light-colored clothing if possible.
- If worker uniforms are provided, provide long-sleeved shirts and long pants as options.
- Provide workers with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.
- Provide workers with repellents (such as Permethrin) to provide greater protection. Permethrin kills ticks on contact. It can be used on clothing but not skin.
- When possible, have workers avoid working at sites with woods, bushes, tall grass, and leaf litter.
- If avoiding these sites is not possible, personal protective measures are of particular importance. If work in these higher-risk sites must occur, take the following steps to reduce tick populations: Remove leaf litter, remove, mow, or cut back tall grass and brush.
- Discourage deer activity.



Recommendations for Workers

Take the following steps to protect yourself from tick bites:

- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks.
- Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.
- The EPA's web site can help you find the product that best suits your needs. Always follow product instructions.
- Treat clothing and gear with products containing 0.5% permethrin. This kills ticks on contact and can be used to treat shoes, clothing, and gear but should not be used on skin.
- One application of permethrin to pants, socks, and shoes remains protective through several washings.
- Alternatively, permethrin-treated clothing is available.
- Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day. The immature forms of these ticks are very small and may be hard to see.
- Shower or bathe as soon as possible after working outdoors to wash off and check for ticks.
- Remember to check your hair, underarms, and groin for ticks.
- Immediately remove ticks from your body using fine-tipped tweezers.
- Grasp the tick firmly and as close to your skin as possible.
- Pull the tick's body away from your skin with a steady motion.
- Clean the area with soap and water.
- Removing infected ticks within 24 hours reduces your risk of being infected with the Lyme disease bacterium.
- Wash and dry work clothes in a hot dryer to kill any ticks present.
- Learn the symptoms of tick-borne diseases.

If you develop symptoms of a tick-borne disease seek medical attention promptly. Be sure to tell your health care provider that you work outdoors in an area where ticks may be present.

Content source; NIOSH

Fatality & Casualty Reporting

State & Town: CONN-OSHA (860) 263-6946 (local) or 1-866-241-4060 (toll-free)
Private Employers: Report to Federal OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA(6742)

Hello New England Businesses and Beyond,

We here at OSHA Region 1 hope everyone is healthy and doing as well as possible during this difficult time. OSHA Region 1 has worked hard to come up with a weekly online training series that will cover a broad range of topics. These weekly sessions will take place each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

These presentations will be streamed through Zoom. Everyone should register as the meeting platform can only accommodate 300 attendees. Registration will also allow us to keep the distribution list updated so you receive future emails. For any registration issues, please email Andrew Palhof, Palhof.andrew@dol.gov

Please logon prior to the start of the event as it will begin right at 9:00 a.m. and unfortunately with the number of attendees, we will not be able to assist or stop the session if anyone has logon or computer issues. For instruction on how to join a zoom meeting.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting->

We will also do our best to answer questions as attendees will be required to use the “hand up” icon which we will discuss during the session. If we run out of time to answer your question, please reach out to us after the session and we will answer your question at that time.



Bringing business together to network and share ideas in the occupational safety and health community.

New England Roundtable Online Series

9:00 am to 10:15 am | log-on begins at 8:40 am
taking place online at: <https://keene.zoom.us/j/402526797>

April 22, 2020: Terry Choate, *Blue U Defense*
Topic: How to Strengthen Your Company During This Challenging Time while enhancing Safety and Security moving forward

April 29, 2020: Joe Green, *Andover OSHA Area Office*
Topic: How to Prepare for an OSHA Inspection

May 6, 2020: Andrew Palhof, *Concord OSHA Area Office*
Topic: OSHA Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements

May 13, 2020: Paul Mangiafico, *Hartford OSHA Area Office*
Topic: OSHA Focus Four (Falls, Struck by, Electrical, Caught in)

May 20, 2020: Marianne Bonito, *Bridgeport OSHA Area Office*
Topic: Workplace Violence

May 27, 2020: Peter Barletta, *Braintree OSHA Area Office*
Topic: Lock Out / Tag Out

June 3, 2020: Ed Conway, *Providence OSHA Area Office*
Topic: Electrical Safety

June 10, 2020: Marianne Bonito, *Bridgeport OSHA Area Office*
Topic: Hazard Communication and GHS

June 17, 2020: Michelle Murphy, *President of Mica Dust Hazard Management*
Topic: Combustible Dust Hazard Awareness: Mitigating dust-related flash fire triangle, explosion pentagon, ignition sources & avoidance.

You have questions.

We'll find answers

To register visit: <http://www.nhsbdc.org/events> If you have never used Zoom, [click here for the basics.](#)

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Hazard Corner...Tree Feller Killed When Struck by Chain Saw--West Virginia

A 52-year-old male tree feller (the victim) was fatally injured after being struck in the right thigh with a chain saw. Prior to the incident, the victim and his son had been harvesting hardwood trees for saw timber, over a period of approximately 5 months, on a 49-acre site. At the time of the incident, the victim's son was away from the cutting area, skidding logs to the landing. No one witnessed the incident, but evidence suggests the following scenario.

The victim cut a forked hickory tree that fell and lodged in a yellow poplar. He then positioned himself between the lodged tree and a sycamore tree and notched the sycamore to fall into the lodged hickory. Before he had time to cut the sycamore, the top of the poplar snapped, freeing the hickory. The trunk or branch of the hickory struck the victim on the back of the head. The blow caused him to fall and stumble forward with his hand gripped around the handle of the running chain saw. The chain saw struck the inside of the victim's unprotected right thigh, causing fatal injury.

When the son returned to skid more logs he found the victim lying on the ground, unresponsive. He checked for vital signs, found none, and went to the landowner's home to call for help. He and the landowner returned to the site, checked the victim for vital signs and found none.

Fire department emergency service personnel arrived on the scene within 10 to 12 minutes after hearing the call on

the scanner, checked the victim, and ran an electrocardiogram which showed no activity. They communicated their findings to the county coroner who authorized transport of the victim by ambulance to his office, where the victim was officially pronounced dead.

NIOSH investigators concluded that, in order to prevent similar occurrences, employers, including the self-employed, should:

- Develop, implement, and enforce a written safety program which includes, but is not limited to, worker training in hazard identification, avoidance, and abatement.
- Ensure that tree fellers properly evaluate the area around timber to be felled, so that potential hazards can be identified and appropriate control measures implemented.
- Ensure that tree fellers dislodge trees according to safe methods specified in the OSHA logging standard.
- Ensure that tree fellers follow safe operating procedures for the use of chain saws.
- Provide and enforce the use of personal protective equipment.
- Provide first aid equipment at jobsites and pertinent training in the use of first aid equipment.

CONN-OSHA~ Training Update...

Due to the current situation created by Corona-virus (COVID-19) several CONN-OSHA training classes have been cancelled but are in the process of being rescheduled. Watch our web site for upcoming event status.

Postponed Fall Protection May 5, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to noon This class is being rescheduled Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. During this training we will examine best practices for elimination or controlling hazards associated with walking and working surfaces in the workplace.

Trenching & Excavation June 18, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to noon This workshop will provide an overview of 29 CFR 1926.650-652 excavations, including the role of the competent person. The session is designed to assist participants in identifying hazards associated with excavations and related activities.

Breakfast Roundtable This discussion group meets the third Tuesday of every month from 8:15 am to 9:45 am. Pre-registration is required. Visit our web page for more information: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/Breakfast/index.htm> To be placed on the e-mail distribution list, contact John Able at John.able@ct.gov.

Classes are free and are held at 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT in Conference Room A/B (unless otherwise noted). To register, contact Catherine Zinsser at catherine.zinsser@ct.gov Pre-registration is required. A Photo I.D. is also required to allow entry into a public building. For more training information, visit the CONN-OSHA web site www.ConnOsha.com