

Chainsaws are powerful tools, and the injuries associated with them are often severe. OSHA reports that roughly 36,000 chainsaw-related injuries send people to the emergency room each year in the U.S., most often involving the legs, hands, and feet. Many of these injuries are preventable and result from recurring factors such as kickback, loss of control during repositioning, inadequate maintenance, lack of protective gear, or falling objects. With the right training, proper planning, and consistent use of personal protective equipment, operators can greatly reduce these risks. The following five practical safety tips are designed to help ensure chainsaw operations are performed safely and without incident.

1

Planning and Preparation. Before starting the saw, take a moment to assess the job. Select the right equipment and review the manufacturer's manual for safe operation. Inspect the saw, checking chain tension, sharpness, fluids and plan your cut paths, fall zones, and retreat routes, especially when working near roads or in tight and uneven areas.

2

Personal Protective Equipment. Proper PPE is non-negotiable. Use a hard hat, eye and hearing protection, gloves, boots, and chainsaw chaps. Avoid loose clothing, drawstrings or long hair that could get caught in the saw. Most injuries come from unexpected moments, so make sure you always wear PPE.

3

Saw Operation and Cutting Techniques. Keep both hands firmly on the handles and avoid reaching across the bar. Never "drop-start" a chainsaw, always follow the manufacturer's recommended starting method. Stay alert for kickback, one of the most common causes of injury. Always engage the chain brake whenever you're relocating or setting the saw down.

4

Maintenance and Servicing. Regular maintenance helps prevent accidents. Before each use, check the chain tension, sharpness, lubrication, and ensure all safety features are working. Confirm bolts and bar fasteners are secure, as loose hardware can result in chain or bar detachment during cutting. Follow the manufacturer's service schedule and use proper replacement parts when needed.

5

Emergency Preparedness. Keep a first-aid kit nearby and know how to use it. Train all operators on emergency procedures, including responding to injuries, summoning help, and safely shutting down equipment. Prevent minor incidents from becoming serious.



LEARN MORE WITH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Texas Department of Insurance: [Chainsaw Safety](#) and [Tree Trimming](#)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Chainsaw Fact Sheet](#)
- U.S. Agricultural Safety & Health Center Chainsaw Safety [Video 1](#), [Video 2](#)
- TML Risk Pool [Online Learning Center](#) – Chainsaw Safety