



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Chainsaw General Safety Message

Chainsaws are inherently dangerous tools. They are proven to be efficient in cutting down trees so it is no surprise that they can cause serious injury to flesh and bones in quick fashion. Each year there are over 30,000 injuries in chainsaw-related incidents in the United States. Many of these injuries occur at home, however, there are many workers who are injured on the job using chainsaws. Most of the hazards associated with chainsaw use can be mitigated through proper training, proper use, and wearing the correct PPE.

Chainsaw Injury Statistics

Most injuries from chainsaw use are due to “kickback”. Kickback occurs when the tip of the chainsaw hits a hard object such as a knot in the wood and kicks back towards the person operating it. 36% percent of chainsaw injuries affect the legs and knees. The average chainsaw injury requires 110 stitches according to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Chainsaw Safe Work Practices

- * Read the entire operation manual before using any chainsaw. Always operate within the manufacturer’s guidelines.
- * Always inspect the chainsaw and work area prior to beginning the work task.
- * Never operate a chainsaw that is in poor condition.
- * Ensure that the chain is properly sharpened, so each cut is efficient.
- * Do not alter any guards on the chainsaw. Also do not alter any safety features such as a lock-out or “dead man” switch. These switches will prevent the chainsaw from engaging accidentally or will shut the chainsaw off if pressure is not applied on the switch.
- * Wear the correct PPE for using a chainsaw. The correct PPE at a minimum includes protective chaps, hardhat, face shield, gloves, earplugs, and protective toe boots. While it may be an expensive investment, the correct PPE will be far cheaper than a trip to an emergency room.
- * Do not operate a chainsaw on a ladder or any unstable surface. Losing your balance while operating a chainsaw can result in a deadly injury.