

Chipper Machine Safety Tips

Chipper machines cut tree limbs into small chips. Hazards arise when operators get too close to, or make contact with, the chipper. Contact with chipper operating components (feeder drums, blades, discs or knives) may result in amputation or death. Operators may also be injured by material thrown or quickly moving in the machine. To minimize these hazards, use appropriate engineering and work practice controls, including operator training and proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Hazards

- Operators making contact with or being pulled into the chipper.
- Hearing loss.
- Face, eye, head or hand injuries.
- Scratches or slaps by limbs being pulled by feeder drums.



Safe Work Practices

- Never reach into a chipper while it is operating.
- Be aware of the material you are feeding, trees embedded with metal or concrete will damage blades.
- Hard woods have to be fed at a slower rate than softer woods.
- Be aware of the wood being fed, branches will often roll abruptly and can snag your clothing or slap you.
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing around a chipper.
- Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines and safety instructions.
- Use earplugs, safety glasses, hard hats and tight fitting gloves.
- Workers should be trained on the safe operation of chipper machines. Always supervise new workers using a chipper to ensure that they work safely and never endanger themselves or others.
- Protect yourself from contact with operating chipper components by guarding the infeed and discharge ports, and preventing the opening of the access covers or doors until the drum or disc completely stops.
- Make sure the discharge chute is aimed in a safe location and no one is allowed to walk into path of chips being discharged.
- Prevent detached trailer chippers from rolling or sliding on slopes by chocking the trailer wheels.



- Maintain a safe distance between chipper operations and other tree work or workers.
- When servicing and/or maintaining chipping equipment (e.g. “unjamming”) use a lockout system to ensure that the equipment is de-energized. The key for the machine should be in the pocket of the person making the repair.

This is one in a series of Volunteer Safety Information Fact Sheets highlighting Samaritan’s Purse North American Ministries programs, policies, or standards.

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