

For More Information:

Centers for Disease Control
& Prevention, Toll-Free:
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
1-888-232-6348 TTY
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov

You can also visit the following
Web site for more information
about chain saw safety:

Centers for Disease Control
& Prevention National Ag Safety
Database (University of Missouri
Columbia Extension):
[http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/
d000801-d000900/d000881/
d000881.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs/d000801-d000900/d000881/d000881.html)

Introduction

- High winds and accumulation of ice can cause branches and trees to come down. Cleaning up this debris often requires the use of a chain saw.
- People who are not used to using a chain saw can be seriously injured if they don't handle it properly.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are more than 36,000 chain saw related injuries every year.
- Before you use a chainsaw, read the operator's manual. Make sure your saw and chain are in good operating condition and that the chain is sharp and tensioned properly.
- If you rent a saw, have the rental store show you how it works, and explain the safety features.

Safety tips

- When you're going to use a chain saw, wear appropriate clothing and protective equipment, including a hard hat, safety goggles, hearing protection, heavy work gloves, steel-toed boots and, if possible, chain saw chaps. Avoid wearing loose clothing that could get caught in the chain.
- Read your owner's manual concerning kickback, which can happen if the chain catches on something. Kickback causes loss of control of the saw, and is one of the most common causes of injury.
- Kickback can happen if there's an abrupt change in the character of the wood, such as a knot or a nail. Running the chain too slowly, twisting the saw, or using a dull or loose chain also can cause kickback.
- To reduce the risk of kickback injury, use a reduced kickback bar, low kickback chain and chain brake. While these don't prevent kickback, they can reduce the severity of injury from it. Avoid contact between the bar tip and any object.
- Always hold the saw firmly with both hands. Do not over-reach or cut above waist height.
- Work slowly, don't rush.

Local Health Departments

Baker	541-523-8211
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Clackamas.....	503-655-8430
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.....ext. 510	
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Union.....	541-962-8801
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Wasco.....	541-506-2600
Washington.....	503-846-3594
Wheeler.....	541-763-2725
Yamhill.....	503-434-7525

- Let the chainsaw do the work; never force it.
- Make sure that your chain saw has a chain brake, chain catcher, working safety throttle switch, working on/off switch and spark arrester.
- Fill a gas-powered chain saw only when the engine is cool. If the saw is out of gas, let it cool 30 minutes before refueling.
- Do not smoke when refueling the saw!
- Be sure to check and refill the chain/bar lubricating reservoir when you refill the gas.
- Use a chain saw outdoors only.
- If your saw is electric, make sure you use an extension cord that’s approved for outdoor use and don’t use the saw in a damp environment.
- Never work with a chain saw when you are tired. Take plenty of rest breaks before you get tired.
- You can immediately dull a chain saw chain by hitting the ground with the tip, or cutting dirty wood, hitting a rock or nails. It is very tiring to cut with a dull chain and the extra pressure you apply to the chain saw to cut faster will only increase your chance of an injury.
- Never work alone with a chainsaw. Make sure someone is within shouting distance, but far enough away so that they won’t be affected by flying chips or sawdust.

Limbing

- Stand on the opposite side of the tree whenever possible, using it as a barrier between yourself and the limb you are cutting. Do not overstretch yourself to do this because you are less stable.
- Do not face the limb you are cutting squarely -- stand at a 45-degree angle to prevent the saw from striking your leg if it slips.
- If you are on a hill, stand on the upside of the hill.
- Avoid contact with power lines.
- Never cut small, flexible branches or brush with your chain saw. Their size and flexibility can easily cause the saw to bounce toward you or bind up with enough force to cause a kickback. The best tools for that kind of work are a hand saw, pruning shears, an axe and other hand tools.

If you have a disability and need this document in an alternate format, call (971) 673-1222 (971) 673-0372 TTY