

What are the hazards and how might they harm?



Cuts, lacerations and amputation from sharp blades, incorrect use of equipment



Trip injuries from obstructions, falls on uneven ground and slopes



Impact injuries from flying debris



Eye injuries from flying debris



HAVS from overuse of equipment



Impact injuries from moving vehicles



Explosion or fire as a result of ignition of petrol



What PPE should the individual wear?



What other precautions should be taken?

Do not exceed the total use time per day allocated to your particular machine

Clearing saws and brush cutters

Safety Task Cards STCBG 07

Safe System of Work

1. Only use a saws and brush cutters if you have been trained to do so and are familiar with the specific model being used.
2. You must wear reinforced toe cap safety boots, tough overalls with long sleeves and legs, goggles, gloves and hearing protection when using equipment. In addition, a high vis vest or jacket should be worn when working in adjacent to roadways and in car parks.
3. Use barriers or signage to restrict access to the work area, particularly when working in areas where there is likely to pedestrian or vehicle traffic.
4. When transporting equipment in a vehicle or trailer, it must be turned off, the fuel lines turned of, the tank upright and the machine held in position.
5. Familiarise yourself with the safety cut out switch and ensure this is working.
6. Ensure all guards are fitted and in good condition, that, all grease points are greased, there are no fuel leaks, and the clutch is working.
7. Check that all handles and vibration absorption units are in place and in good condition.
8. Only use specified blades for the equipment, with respective guards in place.
9. Remove any grass from the machine, especially around the exhaust manifold and cooling fins.
10. Make sure the air filter is clear and fitted correctly
11. Inspect the area for trip hazards and remove any objects that may be discharged by or cause damage to the blades. If obstructions can't be removed, work around them.
12. Check the ground conditions to ensure the ground is not too wet or too steep.
13. Place equipment on firm ground and follow the manufacture's instructions to start the equipment.
14. Once it is running, attach the equipment to the harness hook.
15. Operate the equipment at a steady pace, using a sideways motion, keeping the cutting head parallel to the ground
16. Stop work immediately if any person or animal approaches the area of operation.

If you have any concerns, stop and speak with your line manager before proceeding

List any additional hazards or risks you have identified, and control measures required to manage these.

Clearing saws and brush cutters continued

Safety Task Cards STCBG 07

Safe System of Work

17. Wherever possible work in a direction that discharges debris away from any people, plant or buildings
16. When using equipment around an obstruction keep the deflector guard between the obstruction and the cutting head as far as possible.
17. When cutting woody material, use the left side of the blade to avoid kick out, which occurs when the right-hand side of the blade is stopped or slowed, and can cause the blade to be thrown backwards or to the right.
18. When using the circular blade to remove woody saplings (maximum 7cm diameter stem), ensure that the correct guard with 'stop' is fitted, so the saw can be positioned against the tree during cutting. Operate equipment at full throttle making the cut with uniform, steady pressure to the right-hand side of the stem, with the left-hand side of the blade.
19. Take care when working on slopes.
20. Dog, fox and cat faeces and surrounding may contain worm eggs which can cause infection (Toxocariasis). To prevent infection, always wash your hands before eating or smoking and at the end of the task.
21. Turn the machine off when refueling, making any adjustments, or if you hear unusual noises from the equipment. Switch off the fuel tap if changing blades, leaving equipment unattended and when finished.
22. Keep hands warm, do not grip equipment tightly and take frequent breaks to avoid fatigue.
23. Comply with any exposure limits placed on the equipment. Do not exceed the total use time per day allocated to your particular machine.
24. Equipment must be turned off and have cooled down before refueling it in a designated area, away from sources of ignition and in the shade. Where required use a funnel and clean up any spillages immediately. Small spillages can be wiped up and a spill kit must be used for larger spills.
25. Follow the controls in the relevant COSHH Product Assessment and ensure the correct fuel type is used and correctly mixed with two-stroke oil where applicable.
26. Never smoke or handle ignition sources while refueling.

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