Reduce the Risk of Severe Chain Saw Injuries

KEY POINTS:

- Medical costs for chain saw injuries in the United States total an estimated $350 million per year.
- Chain saws are extremely hazardous. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the average chain saw injury requires 110 stitches.
- Severe cuts, amputations, and other chain saw injuries CAN be prevented. Use the Safety SOLUTIONS Checklist for Safe Practices on Safe Use of Chain Saws to train your workers in English and Spanish.

Employer’s Chain Saw Injury Prevention Checklist

- Be aware that most chain saw injuries occur when the operator comes into contact with the moving blade.
- One of the most important steps you can take is to require chain saw operators to wear long pants, chain saw chaps, and other appropriate protective clothing.
- Never let an employee operate a chain saw unless the person has been fully trained. That training must include the potential hazards of chain saw use.
- Ensure that any chainsaws you purchase have been approved by the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or another nationally recognized testing laboratory.

Chain Saw Safety Checklist for Employees

- Know that a chain saw injury can occur very quickly, and can result in the loss of your leg, arm, toes, other body parts — or even the loss of your life.
- Keep your hands on the handles, and make sure your footing is secure.
- Dress appropriately. Wear sturdy, high-top boots or shoes with nonslip soles. Wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, heavy-duty gloves with a good grip, and chain saw chaps.
- Use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes a hard hat, hearing protection, and safety glasses or safety goggles with side shields.
- Know that one of the biggest hazards of chain saw work is “kickback.” Kickback occurs when the nose or tip of the saw’s guide bar comes into contact with a log, branch, or other object. This results in the guide bar abruptly kicking up and back toward the operator.
- Don’t use a chain saw if you are ill or in poor physical condition.
- Check the area around you to make sure it’s clear of bystanders before beginning chain saw work.
A Good Safety Attitude Will Reduce Injuries

KEY POINTS:
• Safety must start at the TOP. If you show your employees that you believe in the importance of safety, they will, too.
• Having a good safety attitude means placing as much emphasis on safety as you do on quality and on getting customers’ jobs completed on time.
• A good safety attitude also means not taking shortcuts or rushing to get the job done. Use the English/Spanish Checklist for Safe Practices on Hurrying Can Result in Accidents and Injuries to train your workers.

Employer’s Safety Attitude Dos and Don’ts
DO —
• Lead by example. Use the PPE you require your employees to use. Follow all of your company’s other safety rules.
• Take immediate action on any identified hazards. Show employees by your actions that you do not want them to get injured.
• Use positive reinforcement to instill safe behaviors. Praise — don’t blame.

DON’T —
• Just pay lip service to safety. Your employees will see right through it.
• View safety as an extra cost for your company. Having a safe company will reduce costly injuries and the resulting insurance claims.
• Wait to think about safety until after a serious injury or death has occurred.

Employees’ Good Safety Attitude Checklist
✓ Take responsibility for your own safety. Don’t consider safety someone else’s job.
✓ Practice safe work habits. Drive defensively, keep all safety guards and shields in place, and use your company’s required PPE.
✓ Don’t become distracted from your task. Don’t be in too much of a hurry, take shortcuts, or engage in horseplay. Try to get enough sleep.
✓ Think about how your safety affects your family. Who would provide for your family in the future if you were seriously injured or killed?
✓ Don’t view safety as a part-time job. A disabling injury or fatal accident can occur in a split second. Stay focused on safety all the time.
✓ Keep an eye out for hazards. Promptly eliminate them when possible, or immediately report them to your crew leader or other supervisor.

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