



City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training
Employees About:

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Chainsaw Safety

Number 7

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As the temperatures cool, many cities begin their fall cleanups, including trimming trees and the disposal of limbs. While cities generally utilize chainsaws at some point or another throughout the entire year, fall and spring are typically higher use periods and therefore, as a general rule, we want to target these times as prime opportunities to keep the safety aspect front and center.

Chainsaws provide a valuable service to the user in terms of ease of use and time saved, comparably speaking. However, as is usually true, anything that makes our lives easier and saves us time has certain tangible and intangible costs associated with it. Chainsaws are no exception. The risks of operating a chainsaw are obvious. However, what may be less conspicuous is the fact that there are multiple causes of injury and death associated with chainsaws and to try and list them all here would be nearly impossible.

The primary concern with this issue of City Safe is dealing with kickbacks. A kickback can occur when the cutting teeth on the chain or the chain itself catches or binds in the cut. As a result of the chain moving at a high rate of speed, if the chain or teeth strike a hard substance, or get pinched in the cut, the entire saw may move with incredible and sudden force, often times uncontrolled by the user. It need not be stated here, the consequences of a chainsaw in motion coming into contact with skin and bone.

Most chainsaws in use today have certain safety features that are designed to protect the user. However, as with most safety features, they are not foolproof and can often be defeated. Some of these safety features include:

- Chain Brakes;
- Safety Chains;
- Deadman Switches;

Unfortunately, these safety features are not insurance against injury and death in the event that the user tangles with a saw in motion. Additional safety precautions that should be taken when utilizing chainsaws include:

- Avoid cutting with the tip or upper quarter of the bar;

- Use a tip guard that covers the end of the bar and consider getting a carrying case for the saw;
- Operate the saw in the correct cutting position and stand at an angle to the saw so that if a kickback should occur, the saw would miss your head and neck;
- Keep both hands on the saw when cutting and keep your left elbow stiff;
- Don't use a chainsaw to cut wood from old buildings unless you are positive there are no metal objects in the wood;
- Turn off the saw before you start walking any considerable distances;



Obviously, observing these practices can greatly reduce the risk a chainsaw poses to the user. Additional tips for safe use of chainsaws include:

- Users should know their saw - take time to read the instruction manual, taking note of the saw's limitations, capabilities, and proper maintenance procedures.
- Always operate chainsaws below shoulder and/or chest height - NEVER cut over your head.
- Never work alone. Chainsaws are often used in remote locations. Having a co-worker present to aid you in the event of an accident can be crucial in saving life and/or limb.
- When felling trees, always look for dead limbs high in the tree that can break off and strike the operator. Plan an escape route in the event that the tree doesn't fall in the direction it was intended.
- Always keep the base of the saw as close to the log as possible. The saw will tend to move in that direction anyway, and sharp teeth on the base of the saw will prevent the blade from moving around much.
- Finally, protect your eyes and ears, and wear chaps, shoes with steel toes, and heavy gloves.

Following these safety tips can bring you a long way from endangering yourself and others. Unfortunately, they are only as good as the individuals are willing to follow them. Use caution when utilizing these tools. Keep a sharp eye out for hazards — including careless co-workers and stop them from injuring themselves or others.

Thank you to David Leiker from the City of Bel Aire for submitting this safety topic. If you have ideas/issues you want to see covered in City Safe, contact Bret Glendening by phone at (785) 354-9565 or by e-mail at bglendening@ink.org.

Thank you

A note on approaching Inclement Weather Conditions: Safe Driving Tips

Driving always requires your full attention but even more so in bad weather when road conditions can change, and other drivers are more likely to make stupid or careless mistakes.

Rain, even a light shower, makes roads slick, so slow down. Stay four seconds behind the driver in front because you may not be able to stop as fast. In addition:



- Use wipers, defroster, and headlights to improve visibility.
- Be careful of large puddles that can make your brakes less effective. Drive through slowly, tapping your left foot on the brake. Test the brakes once you are through the puddle, making sure the driver in back is not so close he/she will hit you.
- Avoid hydroplaning. This is when you lose control because your tires are driving on water instead of on the road. Drive slowly and smoothly, avoiding puddles. If you do lose control, take your foot off the gas. Do not brake suddenly.

Snow and ice terrify many drivers causing them to drive poorly. These conditions do require more caution. Follow these guidelines:



- Wear sunglasses to reduce glare.
- Clear snow off front and back windshields, side windows, hood, roof, and lights.
- Drive and brake slowly and stay further behind the car in front of you.
- Watch out for ice, especially on bridges & overpasses, and in shady spots.
- Turn into a skid and take your foot off the gas. Do not brake.

Fog also causes accidents. Slow down gradually as you enter fog so you do not hit someone and so that the cars behind you do not hit you. Put your headlights on low beam and use your

wipers and defroster. Avoid passing. If you cannot see well enough to drive, pull off the road, leaving flashers and lights on.

Safety Procedures

There are numerous other safety procedures and techniques that will help you stay safe on the road. Traffic is so heavy these days and poor roads and road construction are common. There is a lot to pay attention to. Make defensive driving a way of life.



- Keep your eyes on the other drivers and expect them to do the unexpected.
- Keep your eyes on the road and be prepared to react quickly. Watch out for potholes, debris, pedestrians, bicycles, and animals.
- Look for changes in traffic and road conditions. Slow down when you see a lot of brake lights and expect to act quickly.
- Keep a additional distance behind the car in front of you in heavy traffic so that there is somewhere for you to go if an accident occurs.
- Be especially cautious in heavy traffic. There is always the possibility of a disabled car, passing cars, or drivers cutting in and out of lanes trying to get to an exit or to move more quickly through traffic. Be prepared to move or stop suddenly.
- Never pass a stopped school bus. Be on the lookout for children anywhere near a stopped or moving bus.
- Be especially cautious when driving a strange vehicle. Take it slow until you get used to the handling, especially in rain or wind.
- Check rear and side mirrors constantly. Learn your mirrors' blind spots so you know when and where to turn your head to check.
- Keep your mind on your driving, your eyes on the road, and your hands on the wheel. Driving requires all of your physical and mental attention. Do not daydream or get too involved in conversation.

Wrap-Up

More people are killed and injured in road accidents than any other way, and most of them knew how to drive safely. Either they did not use their knowledge or the other driver did not. In many cases, careless driving turns fatal because a safety belt was not used.

We all want to hold onto our lives and licenses, to keep our cars in good shape, and our insurance rates down. And certainly, no one wants to have someone else's death or injury on their conscience. So pay attention to how you drive. Put your safety sense in high gear every time you get behind the wheel. And always buckle up!



KMIT Supervisor Training Seminars

Winter 2003
Oberlin, Hays, Dodge City, and Kingman

WORK COMP COST CONTROL BEGINS WITH YOU

These training seminars are designed specifically for supervisors*. Their intent is to inform and educate on various work comp issues that are facing all Kansas municipalities, regardless of whether or not they are members of KMIT.

Our general program will strive to answer the question of "WHY is Work Comp Important to Supervisors?" Additional coverage will be dedicated to addressing precautions that should be taken during the pre-employment hiring process, and post-employment considerations. The seminar will also address issues of work comp fraud, claims management, and those rare occurrences that may lead to a work comp claim denial.

For information, contact Wendy Flowers at wflowers@networksplus.net

* Includes front line supervisors, department and division heads, and small city managers/administrators/clerks.

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