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Chipper Safety

Two-thirds of the wood chipper-related fatalities occur when workers get caught and crushed by the chipper feed mechanism and/or get pulled into the cutting knives. Contact with chipper operating components (i.e. blades, discs or knives) may result in amputation or death. Workers are also injured by material thrown from the machine. To minimize these hazards, use appropriate engineering and work practice controls, including training. Clearing jams while the machine is still operating or slowing down can pull you into the cutting knives or feeding gears.



Review the owner's manual and procedures - Hazards arise when workers get too close to, or make contact with, the chipper. Before operating chipping and grinding equipment, it is important to review all safety procedures on decals and the operator's manual and video to gain a complete understanding of the equipment's functions and potential hazards. Be sure that an operator's manual is provided with the unit. If you are ever uncertain about a procedure or function of the equipment, contact your equipment dealer or manufacturer.

Review your "Daily Inspection" procedures - Each day before starting the machine review all safety decals and check all engine gauges, replacing any labels that may be damaged. Check, maintain, and service all safety equipment for proper operation, including the "Last Chance Stop" system, engine disable plug, control bar, hood pin, spring lock for hood pin, pusher tool, etc. Check the entire machine for loose nuts, bolts and components. Make sure all guards are tight and securely in place.

Ensure that your maintenance program is adequate - Be sure to review your maintenance procedures to ensure that equipment is operating as the manufacturer intended. Lighting and retro-reflective material should be checked daily. Never leave a chipper clogged with debris at the end of the day. Inspect it every morning.

Safe Work Practices

- **Never reach into a chipper while it is operating.**
- **Do not wear** loose-fitting clothing around a chipper. Wear Breakaway PPE to prevent being caught and dragged in while working.
- **Always follow the manufacturer's guidelines** and safety instructions.
- **Use PPE including earplugs, safety glasses, hard hats and gloves.**
- **Wear Type II minimum Breakaway High visibility safety vests** if needed for working around traffic
- **Ensure** that all **lighting is visible** to on-coming traffic while operating in roadways.
- **Workers should be trained** on the safe operation of chipper machines.
- Feed **cut ends first** into chipper
- **Keep** the area around the chipper **free from trip hazards**
- **Use a tool** to push small debris into the chipper...**not your hands**
- **Protect yourself** from contacting operating chipper components **by guarding** the in feed and discharge ports, and preventing the opening of the access covers or doors until the drum or disc completely stops.
- **Prevent** detached trailer chippers from **rolling or sliding** on slopes by chocking the wheels.
- **Maintain a safe distance** (i.e., two tree or log lengths) between chipper operations and other work/workers.
- When servicing and/or maintaining chipping equipment (i.e., "un-jamming") use a lockout system to ensure that the equipment is de-energized. **Review your LOTO procedure for Chippers.**

This bulletin is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.