



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
University Health and Safety

Chain Saws, Chippers, and Brush Cutters

Effective Date: May 2018, revision November 2019

I. PURPOSE

The program establishes minimum safety-related requirements for the use of chain saws, chippers, and powered brush cutters throughout the University of Minnesota.

II. SCOPE

The requirements set forth in this document apply to any University employee or student, acting within the scope of their work, academic/educational, or research responsibilities, uses any of the following equipment, regardless of purpose: chain saws (including pole-mounted chain saws or powered pole saws), tree/branch chippers, and brush cutters.

III. DEFINITIONS

Brush cutter – Machines which utilize a metal saw blade(s) to cut brush, tree trunks, and vegetation, usually up to four inches in diameter, at ground level. Included in this definition are “brush mowers” which perform the same function, but are similar to a very large, heavy duty walk-behind lawn mower.

Powered pole saw – A powered chain saw which is mounted at the end of a pole, allowing the operator to reach elevated areas from the ground. This can also be called a pole saw. For the purposes of this program, powered pole saws are considered chain saws.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee Responsibilities

- Review the UHS guidance document on the use of chainsaws, chippers, and brush cutters.
- Evaluate work areas to identify unsafe work environments such as fallen trees and trees close to electrical grids.
- Inspect the work areas to identify unsafe work environments such as fallen trees and trees close to electrical grids
- Make sure you are wearing appropriate PPE before beginning any work.
- Make sure a first aid kit is available before beginning any work.
- Inspect all equipment and ensure it is in proper working condition before each use.
- Only use equipment you have been trained to operate safely.

- Follow manufacturer’s instructions on how to safely operate the equipment.
- Immediately remove damaged or suspect equipment from service and report it to your supervisor.
- Immediately report unsafe conditions to your supervisor.
- Attend training upon initial assignment and at least every three years thereafter.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Review and ensure employees review the UHS guidance document on the use of chainsaws, chippers, and brush cutters.
- Evaluate work areas to identify unsafe work environments such as fallen trees and trees close to electrical grids.
- Supply employees with the right PPE for the required work.
- Ensure all equipment is in good working condition.
- Immediately notify management of unsafe or uncorrected hazardous conditions and ensure all employees are made aware of the hazards.
- Ensure employee training is provided and documented upon initial assignment and at least every three years thereafter.
- Ensure First Aid kits are provided. The contents of the first aid kits listed should be adequate for small worksites consisting of two to three employees. The kits should be restocked on a regular basis and expired items removed.

Departmental Responsibilities

- Ensure work areas are evaluated to identify where employee group who use chainsaws, chippers, and brush cutters.
- Purchase and provide necessary PPE for required tasks.
- Ensure all employees are appropriately trained on proper use of equipment and how to identify and report hazardous conditions.

University Health & Safety Responsibilities

- Maintain the Chainsaw written program.
- Provide training resources.
- Inform affected departments of program requirements.
- Provide technical assistance to areas working with chainsaws and related equipment
- Monitor implementation of the written program.

V. PROCEDURE

For details and information on the safe use and training requirements, please see UHS guidance document: [Chain Saws Chippers and Brush Cutters](#)

VI. REFERENCES

29 CFR 1910.266 Logging Operations