



Safety considerations associated with handheld landscaping equipment are numerous, including personal protective equipment, ergonomics, electrical safety, fuel-handling safety, proper equipment guarding and maintenance, correct application and workers' awareness of their surroundings.

Failure to operate equipment safely can result in cuts, lacerations and punctures which OSHA cites as the second leading injury type in the landscape and horticultural industry. Proper safety training is necessary to reduce the risk of injury.

The checklist below can help managers and crew members significantly reduce injury risks.

Do's:

- Use the right tool for the job. If you are unsure which piece of equipment would be best, ask your crew leader.
- Wear your PPE. Know what personal protective equipment your company requires for each tool you use and wear it.
- Manage the work space.
 - Keep pets, customers and other people not involved in the work at a safe distance from the area. Do not use line trimmers or leaf blowers within 50 feet of people or pets. Direct tools away from other employees working in close proximity.
 - Make sure work areas are well-lighted and the floor or ground as clean and dry as possible to prevent slips or trips with or around tools.
 - Ensure cords from electric tools don't present a tripping hazard. Also keep them away from heat, oil, sharp edges and cutting surfaces of power saws or drills.
- Keep blades sharpened. Dull tools are more hazardous than sharp ones because they require excessive pressure.
- Maintain good footing and balance. Wearing sturdy work boots can help with this.
- Be careful with fuel. Transport and store fuel for power tools only in approved flammable liquid containers. Do not refuel equipment with the engine running or before it has cooled. Fuel vapors can ignite when exposed to a hot engine
- Stay alert. Be aware of your surroundings and the position of hand tools in relation to your body.
 - Be careful not to relax your arms in a way that brings cutting edges of shears, trimmers, chain saws or other tools in contact with your legs.
 - Grip tools firmly and securely so they do not slip.
 - As with any sharp tool, cut away from yourself.
 - Know the location of your hands and fingers before making a cut.
 - Let the cutting surface do the work. When extra effort is needed to make the cut, sharpen or adjust blades.
 - Give an audible warning, such as "timber," before a branch falls.
- Remember to unplug. Disconnect tools when you aren't using them, before servicing them and when changing accessories such as blades or bits.

