

Handheld Equipment

Part 2 of 2



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.

Don't:

- Begin using a tool before you've been trained. You must fully understand the training, which should include information about safety precautions and potential hazards.
- Use a damaged or improperly operating tool. Examine each tool before use and report problems to a supervisor. Remove all damaged tools from use and tag them, "Do Not Use."
- Handle power tools carelessly.
 - Never carry a tool by the cord or yank the cord to disconnect it from a receptacle.
 - Be sure not to place your fingers on the switch button while carrying a powered tool.
 - Don't carry pruning tools with sharp ends pointed up.
- Use power tools in damp or wet locations. This is okay only with tools that are approved for use in such conditions.
- Compromise equipment safety.
 - Never remove safety guards or override any safety controls or switches.
 - Don't use an adapter or other means to plug a three-pronged cord into a two-hole receptacle. The third prong is a grounding conductor that protects you from electric shock.
- Ignore ergonomics.
 - If a tool is equipped with a shoulder strap, adjust the strap to the best fit for you and wear it.
 - Wear anti-vibration gloves when appropriate.
 - Stretch during scheduled breaks and also take micro-breaks — 20 to 30-second pauses in which you stop performing tasks and stretch. Do this about every 15 minutes, especially if your task is repetitive.
 - Practice neutral posture, which is the body's natural stance. When you stand in neutral posture, a straight line could be drawn from your ear through your shoulder, hip, knee and ankle.
 - Carry only essential tools in a tool belt. While using a tool belt is helpful, wearing one that is too heavy could strain your lower back and hips.
- Leave tools in dangerous places. Equipment on overhead surfaces could fall on someone, and tools on the ground or floor could be tripping hazards.



Safety Tips developed by National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP)

