

# Chain Saw Safety – Know The Laws Of Your Province



**What you must do to protect workers who operate chain saws.**

All jurisdictions require employers to take specific measures to protect workers who use chain saws at the workplace. Here's a summary of the requirements in each part of Canada.

## OHS Chain Saw Requirements

### FEDERAL

(a) Chain saws must meet CSA CAN3-Z62.1-M85, *Chain Saws* (Feb., 1985); (b) Employees must report any defect that may render chain saw unsafe for use to their employer as soon as feasible; (c) Employer must mark or tag as unsafe and remove from service any chain saw used by his employees that has a defect that may render it unsafe for use; and (d) Employee must be instructed and trained by a qualified person appointed by employer in the safe and proper inspection, maintenance and use of any chain saw he/she is required to use (COHS Regs., Part XIII)

### ALBERTA

(a) Employer must ensure that a chain saw is: (i) operated, adjusted and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, and (ii) designed or equipped with a mechanism that minimizes the risk of injury from kickback when the saw is in use; and (b) Worker must not adjust chain of a chain saw while the saw's motor is idling (*OHS Code*, Sec. 376)

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Chain saw must: (a) Meet CSA Z62.1-95; (b) Have a chain brake that activates automatically upon kickback regardless of the position of the power head or operator's hands (except for a chain saw manufactured before Jan. 1, 1999, that has a guide bar exceeding 66 cm (26 in.), measured from the top of the cutters at the bar tip to the point of the 'dogs' or 'bumper spikes'; and (c) Be stopped before the saw operator moves from cut to cut, unless the next cut is in the immediate area and the saw operator can safely move to the next cutting position (*OHS Reg.*, Part 12)

## MANITOBA

Employer must ensure that: (a) A chain saw used at a workplace is: (i) manufactured, used and maintained in accordance with CSA Z62.1-15, (ii) equipped with a safety chain, chain brake and chain catcher, (iii) operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, and (iv) equipped with a mechanism that minimizes the risk of injury from kickback when the saw is in use; and (b) Appropriate start-up procedures are developed and implemented to protect workers using chain saws operating from an elevated work platform or personnel basket (*WSH Reg.*, Sec. 16.27)

## NEW BRUNSWICK

**Owner Duties:** Owner of a chain saw used other than in a logging, silviculture or arboricultural operation, must ensure that the chain saw: (a) Meets CSA Z62.1-95, *Chain Saws*, and CSA Z62.3-96 *Chain Saw Kickback*; (b) Is used only with a safety chain that's filed according to the manufacturer's specifications; (c) Is equipped with an adequate chain brake; and (d) Is fitted only with component parts specified by the manufacturer (*OHS Gen. Reg.*, Sec. 348)

**Employer Duties:** Employer, must ensure that an employee who operates a chain saw, other than in a logging, silviculture or arboricultural operation: (a) Wears: (i) Safety footwear that meets CSA Z195:14 (reaffirmed 2019), or a standard offering equivalent protection, that has chain saw protection on the top and sides and non-slip soles; (b) Wears leg protection that's: (i) of the appropriate size to protect the knee and leg from the top of the safety footwear to the groin, and (ii) is made of a minimum of three ply 2108 nylon or a material affording equivalent protection, secured in a manner that allows the leg protection to perform its function; (c) Doesn't work alone; and (d) Has: (i) suitable fire extinguisher or a round point shovel readily available, (ii) suitable first aid supplies readily available, and (iii) a pressure bandage; (e) Exception: The above rules don't apply to an employee performing structural firefighting duties (*OHS Gen. Reg.*, Secs. 346 and 351)

**Employee Duties:** Employee who uses a chain saw, other than in a logging, silviculture or arboricultural operation, must: (a) Wear the required protective equipment; (b) If the employee is operating a chain saw: (i) stop the motor before carrying the saw from one location to another, (ii) stop the motor before adjusting the chain, (iii) adjust the saw according to the manufacturer's specifications so that the chain is stopped while the motor is idling, (iv) immediately remove a defective saw from use until repaired, (v) start the saw when it's cold by holding it against a solid object below waist level, (vi) not start the saw by pulling on the cord while the other hand engages the throttle mechanism, (vii) hold the saw in both hands, (viii) not operate the saw above shoulder height, (ix) stand on a solid base, (x) not climb on or work under a felled tree, (xi) not work alone, (xii) not girdle trees, (xiii) not refuel the saw while the engine's operating, (xiv) move the saw at least 3 m from where it was refueled before starting the engine, (xv) refuel only from a non-glass container with spout or funnel, (xvi) not refuel the saw near any source of ignition, and (g) carry or keep close at hand the pressure bandage provided by the employer; and (c) Exception: The above rules don't apply to an employee performing structural firefighting or rescue duties (*OHS Gen. Reg.*, Secs. 347, 350 and 352)

## NEWFOUNDLAND

Chain saw must: (a) Meet CSA Z62.1; (b) Have a chain brake that activates automatically upon kickback regardless of the position of the power head or operator's hands; and (c) Be stopped before the saw operator moves from cut to cut, unless the next cut is in the immediate area and the saw operator can safely move to the next cutting position (*OHS Regs.*, Sec. 109)

## NOVA SCOTIA

Employer must ensure that a chain saw meets the most recent versions of CSA Z62.1-95, *Chain Saws*, and CSA Z62.3-96 *Chain Saw Kickback* (*Occ. Safety Gen. Regs.*, Sec. 90)

## ONTARIO

**Industrial:** Chain saw must: (a) Have a chain that minimizes the possibility of a kickback, and a device that will effectively stop the chain in case of a kickback; (b) Be in safe operating condition; (c) Be held firmly when it's started; (d) Be held firmly by both hands when it's being used; and (e) Have the chain stopped when it's not actually cutting (*Indust. Ests. Regs.*, Sec. 39)

**Construction:** (a) Chain saw must have a chain that minimizes kickback and a device to stop the chain in case of a kickback; (b) No worker may use a chain saw unless he/she has been adequately trained in its use and is wearing adequate PPE and clothing, including gloves, and adequate eye and hearing protection; (c) Worker must hold a chain saw firmly when starting it and firmly in both hands when using it; and (d) The chain of a chain saw must be stopped when it's not cutting (*Const. Projects Reg.*, Sec. 112)

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

General power tool requirements apply; The following chain saw-specific rules apply only to forestry operations: (a) Employer must ensure that workers operating a chain saw wear approved hearing protection, safety eyewear, safety pants, a hard hat and safety boots; (b) Employer must ensure that no worker operates a chain saw unless it's in safe working order; (c) No worker may operate a chain saw unless it's approved and equipped with a safety chain, chain brake, anti-vibration mounts, throttle-control lock out, chain catcher and rear hand guard; (d) Worker must stop the chain saw motor before refueling or performing maintenance work on a chain saw; (e) Employer must ensure that worker stores and distributes fuel for a chain saw from an approved safety container; (f) Worker may not start a chain saw unless it's at least 3 m (10 ft.) from the fuel container; (g) Worker have a fire extinguisher in proper working condition and readily available when operating a chain saw during the fire season; (h) Each chain saw operator must carry an approved pressure dressing and bandage; (i) Worker must maintain a chain saw so that the chain won't move when the motor is idling; (k) Worker must stop a chain saw motor if it's to be carried a distance longer than usual between trees to be felled; (l) Worker must hold the chain saw firmly in both hands while operating it; (m) Worker may not start a chain saw while it's resting against any part of his/her body; and (n) Worker must wear safety gloves or mitts while sharpening a chain saw (*OHSA Gen. Regs.*, Sec. 41)

## QUÉBEC

**General:** Chain saws: (a) Must meet CSA CAN3-Z62.1-M85 and also be equipped with an anti-vibrating system; (b) May only be started: (i) at a distance of over 3 m from the place where the gasoline tank was filled, (ii) if the chain stopper is applied, and (iii) if it's set firmly on the ground or the worker holds it by gripping the main handle near the chain stopper while securing the rear handle between his/her knees except if it weighs less than 4.3 kg; (c) Must be held with both hands and both feet firmly standing on a stable surface; (d) Must have the chain stopper applied when not held firmly by the worker and while being carried from one work area to another; (e) Must be equipped with a chain that's sharpened, adjusted and maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations; (f) Must never be used any higher than shoulder level; (g) May only be adjusted or serviced when the motor is turned off; and (h) Must never be fueled when there's a fire or explosion hazard (*OHS Regs.*, Secs. 241 and 242)

**Construction:** Chain saws: (a) Must meet CSA Z62.1-15, Chainsaws, for Classes 1A and 2A; (b) Must not be used to cut materials other than wood, unless such use is specified by the manufacturer and the required recommended modifications have been made; (c) Must not be used inside a closed building if it has an internal combustion engine; (d) User of a chain saw must wear one of the following kinds of protective footwear: (i) class 1 protective footwear meeting CSA Z-195, (ii) footwear that meets the recommendations for the user of a chain saw, (iii) footwear that has protective gaiters and meets Part 9 of EN Standard 381-9, Personal protective equipment for users of hand chain saw, (iv) footwear that meets ISO Standard 17249, Safety footwear with resistance to chain saw cutting, or (v) footwear that meets ISO Standard 20345, Personal protective equipment 'Safety footwear, that has protective gaiters and meets Part 9 of EN Standard 3819; (e) Chain saw user must wear pants or chaps meeting Class A, C or D of ASTM Standard F 3325-18, Standard Specification for Leg Protective Devices for Chain Saw Users; (f) User of a chain saw must wear gloves that allow a grip on the chain saw's handles; (g) User must: (i) start the chain saw by firmly maintaining the front handle with the left hand and the rear handle between the knees or on the ground by standing with the right foot in the rear handle, (ii) hold the chain saw with both hands and with feet solidly set during use, (iii) Apply the chain brake during a displacement when the engine is on, and (iv) Not hold the chain saw higher than the shoulders (*Safety Code for Const.*, Sec. 7.1.3.2)

## SASKATCHEWAN

Employer, contractor or supplier must ensure that a chain saw is: (a) Equipped with an effective chain brake or a chain and bar designed to minimize possibility of a kickback; (b) Designed and constructed so that the chain stops when the engine's at idle; (c) If a chain saw is to be used by a worker operating from an elevated cage or basket, the width of which is less than twice the length of the chain saw, ensure that a secondary platform is installed outside the cage or basket and is used to store the chain saw and start the chain saw engine; (d) Employer or contractor must ensure that a worker who operates a chain saw: (i) stops the chain while walking with the saw, (ii) doesn't operate the saw at a height above shoulder level, (iii) holds the saw firmly in both hands while operating it, and (iv) maintains the chain saw, cutting chain and safeguards in safe operating condition (*OHS Regs.*, Sec. 10-13)

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES & NUNAVUT

Employer or supplier must ensure that a chain saw is: (a) Equipped with an effective chain brake or a chain and bar designed to minimize possibility of a kickback; (b) Designed and constructed so that the chain stops when the engine's at idle; (c) If a chain saw is to be used by a worker operating from an elevated cage or basket, the width of which is less than twice the length of the chain saw, ensure that a secondary platform is installed outside the cage or basket and is used to store the chain saw and start the chain saw engine; (d) Employer must ensure that a worker who operates a chain saw: (i) stops the chain while walking with the saw, (ii) doesn't operate the saw at a height above shoulder level, (iii) holds the saw firmly in both hands while operating it, and (iv) maintains the chain saw, cutting chain and safeguards in safe operating condition (*OHS Regs.*, Sec. 154)

## YUKON

(a) Chain saws must meet CSA Z62.1-03 or a similar standard acceptable to the director; (b ) Chain saw used by a worker must be equipped with: (i) a handle vibration isolation system that x. dampens vibration in both the front and rear handles, and y. enables the worker to stop the chain saw if an isolator fails, (ii) an anti-kickback chain, and (iii) a chain brake that activates automatically upon a kickback regardless of the position of the power head or the worker's hands x. when the guide bar is 0.66 m (26 in.) or less in length, or y. when the guide bar is more than 0.66 m (26 in.) on a saw manufactured after Dec. 31, 2003; c) A worker operating a chain saw must: (i) have a suitable fire extinguisher or round point shovel readily available during fire season, (ii) have suitable first aid supplies including a pressure bandage readily available, (iii) not work alone in a forestry operation, (iv) wear appropriate PPE, (v) stop the motor before carrying the saw from one location to another, unless the next cut is in the immediate area and he/she can safely move to the next cutting position, (vi) stop the motor before adjusting the chain, (vii) adjust the saw according to the manufacturer's recommendation so the chain is stopped while the motor is idling, (viii) immediately remove a defective saw from use until repaired, (ix) start the saw when it's cold by holding it firmly against a solid object below waist level, (x) hold the saw in both hand while operating it, (xi) stand on a solid base while operating the saw, (xii) move the saw at least 3 m (10 ft.) from where it was refueled before starting the engine, (xiii) refuel only from an approved gasoline container with a spout or funnel to minimize spillage, (xiv) not drop start the saw by pulling on the cord while the other hand engages the throttle mechanism, (xv) not operate the saw above shoulder height, (xvi) not climb on, or work under, a felled tree, (xvii) not girdle a tree, and (xviii) not refuel the saw while the engine is operating or it's near a source of ignition (*OHS Regs.*, Secs. 4.10 and 4.11)