

# Safety Talk

SEPTEMBER 2025



## CHAINSAW SAFETY

Chainsaws are powerful tools to help you in landscaping work or cleaning up after storm damage, but they can cause serious injuries. Please practice the following safety tips when using chainsaws.

### Always Wear PPE

- Head, face and hearing protection
- Wear gloves that are padded with polyurethane foam in the palm to reduce vibration
- Don't use standard cotton gloves
- Wear steel toed boots



### Know Your Saw

- Inspect the saw before each use
- Make sure the chain is sharp
- Inspect the chain brake, kickback device & safety throttle before operating the saw
- Use the correct size saw for the job

### Avoid Chainsaw Kickback

- Avoid cutting with the tip or upper quarter of the bar
- Keep both hands on the saw when cutting
- Stand to one side, so you won't be hit if the saw does kickback
- Never try to cut something above shoulder height

### Bucking Safety

- When bucking for firewood, cut the tree into lengths that can be easily handled by one or two people
- Be sure to stand on the uphill side of the tree, since logs tend to roll downhill and can hurt you if you get in the way
- Train employees how to avoid pinching the saw when bucking

### Additional Tips

- Refuel at least 10 feet from open flames
- Always start the chainsaw on the ground or other firm surface
- Shut off the saw or engage the chain brake when carrying the saw
- Never operate a chainsaw while standing on a ladder
- Use a bucket truck when working at elevated heights

## LOCKOUT/TAGOUT REQUIREMENTS

OSHA's 1910.147 Standard is designed to protect workers from injury when performing maintenance or repairs on machinery or equipment. This standard also applies to any service work being performed on county fleet vehicles or heavy equipment.

Performing service or maintenance on vehicles or equipment that are powered by an internal combustion engine exposes employees to a variety of hazardous energy sources. Some of those sources include:

- **Thermal Energy** - Hot water in a radiator, usually is under high pressure if the engine has been running a while.
- **Electrical Energy** - A battery in a vehicle will supply electrical voltage to components.
- **Mechanical Energy** - Turning shafts, gears, belts, fans etc.
- **Pneumatic Energy** - Moving cylinders
- **Hazardous Chemicals** - Corrosives from batteries, fuel etc.
- **Potential Kinetic Energy** - Stored energy from an elevated dump bed on a truck, hydraulic cylinders, elevated loader buckets etc.

Obviously, if someone were to inadvertently start the engine of a vehicle while another person is working underneath the vehicle or beneath the hood, the person could suffer injuries from turning belts, pulleys, fans and other moving parts. It is important to develop lockout/tagout procedures to protect your employees. Listed below is an example of procedures for shutting down, isolating, blocking and securing machines or equipment.

### **Lockout/Tagout Procedures:**

1. Notify affected employees in the area of work that lockout/tagout procedures will be implemented.
2. Park vehicle, place vehicle in park, turn off ignition, set parking brake and use chocks to prevent rolling.
3. Remove keys and keep in authorized employee's possession.
4. Remove cable from negative battery terminal.
5. Attempt to start the vehicle with the key. If the vehicle does not start, continue to next step. If the vehicle starts, then energy isolation was not achieved and further steps will need to be taken to ensure isolation.
6. Attach a tag to the steering wheel at 12 O'clock position identifying the mechanic/authorized employees performing the work.
7. Work can now begin

It may also be necessary to block elevated components or put those components at full rest on the ground before any work can begin. Examples would include performing work on loader buckets or dump beds.

If you need assistance with implementing a lockout/tagout program, please contact your LGIP Risk Control Representative.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Just as every organization is different, so too is every workplace emergency. An organization with a systematized, comprehensive emergency response plan can effectively minimize risks and save lives before, during, and after any emergency. To optimize your organization's emergency response procedures follow these steps:

### 1. Have a Plan and Write It Down

Effective emergency response starts far in advance of an actual incident. OSHA recommends thinking through worst-case scenarios: Ask yourself what you would do if the worst happened. What if a fire broke out in your boiler room? Or a tornado hit your building? Or a train carrying hazardous waste derailed nearby? Once you have identified potential emergencies, consider how they would affect you and your workers and how you would respond. From here, you can start developing your **Emergency Action Plan**. Although not every employer is required by law to have a plan, it's a good idea for virtually every organization and facility. Consider every element and step of your emergency response process—alerts, evacuation routes, medical assistance, rescue operations, and more—as well as what roles (e.g. evacuation wardens) your employees fulfill.

According to OSHA, every plan should include, at minimum the following:

- A preferred method for reporting fires and other emergencies.
- An evacuation policy and procedure.
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments, such as floor plans, workplace maps, and safe or refuge areas.
- Names, titles, departments, and telephone numbers of individuals both within and outside your company to contact for additional information or explanation of duties and responsibilities under the emergency plan.
- Procedures for employees who remain to perform or shut down critical plant operations, operate fire extinguishers, or perform other essential services that cannot be shut down for every emergency alarm before evacuating.
- Rescue and medical duties for any workers designated to perform them.

### 2. Maintain Proper Equipment and Certified Devices

Make sure to maintain all necessary emergency tools, gear, devices, controls, and systems, including the following:

- personal protective equipment (e.g. goggles, respirators, helmets, gloves, etc.)
- medical and first aid equipment
- alarms (e.g. fire alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, etc.)
- fire suppression systems (e.g. sprinklers, extinguishers, etc.)

### 3. Create and Post Facility Evacuation Maps

Evacuations can prevent injuries and loss of life—or aggravate an already-chaotic situation. Make sure your workforce has the information they need to act quickly in a crisis. With clear, familiar evacuation maps, your workers can exit buildings in a speedy and orderly fashion, minimizing the chances of a stampede or blockage.

### 4. Train Your Workforce and Document Everything

Once again, training and documentation make a big difference in safety outcomes and EHS compliance. Train all employees on your organization's emergency response procedures, including accident management, equipment handling, evacuation routes, and so forth. Keep training top-of-mind with periodic drills and refresher courses. Finally, be sure to maintain up-to-date and detailed training records, accident reports, and other related documentation—and keep all documents in an easily accessible location.

## SAFE USE OF AERIAL LIFTS

Aerial lifts can tip over or collapse for a number of reasons. Common causes of tip overs include high wind and other severe weather conditions, operating on unstable or uneven surfaces, extending the boom too far, loading the basket with too much weight, and damaged or defective equipment.

Before using any aerial lifts, follow the safety tips listed below:

- Ensure operators wear full body harnesses that is attached to a lanyard.
- Inspect the lift prior to each use.
- Review the manufacturer's instructions and other safety information posted on the equipment.
- Know the rated workload and maximum platform height
- Rated workloads can vary depending on the angle of the boom and whether outrigger devices or stabilizers are used.
- Before elevating anyone in an aerial lift basket, follow these procedures:
  - Set the brakes so the vehicle will not move while a worker is in the air.
  - Place wheel chocks under the tires if the vehicle is on an incline.
  - If necessary, position the outriggers or stabilizers on a solid surface.
- Before moving the vehicle, make sure the boom is properly cradled, and outriggers or stabilizers are returned and stowed in position.
- Never move the equipment unless the basket has been lowered and the boom has been retracted.
- Make sure the path of travel is firm, level, and free of obstructions.
- While driving, maintain a safe distance from obstacles, debris, holes, depressions, ramps, and other hazards, and drive at a safe speed for the conditions.

## SEPTEMBER 2025 QUIZ TRUE OR FALSE

1. Every employer is required by law to have written emergency response plans  
**True or False**
2. Posting evacuation maps and training employees helps to ensure quick reactions during a crisis  
**True or False**
3. OSHA's 1910.147 standard also applies to lockout/tagout requirements for fleet vehicles and heavy equipment.  
**True or False**
4. Employees are required to wear a full body harness that is attached to a lanyard when working in an aerial lift.  
**True or False**
5. Eye protection is the only PPE needed when operating a chainsaw  
**True or False**

## Answers

1. False 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. False