**CHAINSAW USE SOP TEMPLATE**

**This is a template. Modify as needed to meet local needs. Version: 05/15/2020**

**Purposed and Scope**

A chainsaw is a useful, and dangerous, tool. This policy establishes guidelines for the safe and proper operation of chainsaws. It was promulgated to:

1. Prevent accidents, injuries, or deaths that might result from unsafe operation or improper use of a chainsaw.
2. Prevent damage to a chainsaw that might result from unsafe operation or improper use.

This policy applies to all fire department personnel.

**General**

1. Fire department personnel who respond to fire and other incidents shall be responsible for knowing how to properly and safely operate the chainsaws used by the department.
2. Officers shall train the members under their command in the safe and proper use of the chainsaws assigned to their apparatus.
3. An officer shall immediately stop any unsafe or improper use of a chainsaw and shall take the appropriate action necessary to correct the situation.
4. Drivers shall inspect and operate each chainsaw carried on their apparatus at the beginning of each tour of duty or each training night and after each use to ensure that the chainsaws are clean, functioning properly, and safe to operate.
5. Any chainsaw discovered to be unsafe or malfunctioning shall be removed from service and properly tagged as to the nature of the problem. Chainsaws removed from service shall be reported immediately to the shift or station supervisor.
6. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that chainsaws are properly fueled and that spare fuel containers are full of the correct gas/oil mixture and in the proper place on the apparatus.

**Hazards**

There are many hazards associated with the use of a chainsaw, including, but not limited to, those listed below. Fire department personnel shall be familiar with these hazards associated with the use of a chainsaw so that they may be aware of these hazards while using a chainsaw.

* Serious injuries from saw chains
* Manual handing injuries
* Slipping, Falling
* Hearing damage
* Eye injury
* Falling limbs
* Fire and burns

**Personal Protection**

Full protective clothing shall be worn by those members operating chainsaws, and by those members near the operation of chainsaws saws.

**Bystanders**

Anyone, including fire department personnel and civilians, not associated with the operation of the chainsaw shall remain at a safe distance from the chainsaw operations.

**Use During Firefighting Operations**

Because firefighting operations develop rapidly and dynamically, and because firefighters need the thermal protection provided by firefighter PPE, the use of firefighter turnouts as protective equipment is allowed for personnel operating a chainsaw during firefighting operations.

1. The operator shall wear a firefighting helmet
2. The operator shall wear full firefighting turnouts that include bunker pants and not pullup boots
3. The face shield from the fire helmet or goggles shall be in place to provide eye protection
4. The operator should wear hearing protection, if operations so permit
5. To prevent accidents caused by moving chains, it is imperative that the operator have their protective clothing completely buttoned up, and that no other individual is within the kickback zone of the chainsaw

**Use During Non-Firefighting Operations**

The fire department may respond to non-fire incidents where a chainsaw is needed. On these incidents, personnel should wear personal protective equipment designed for protecting the wearer from injury while using a chainsaw.

1. The operator shall wear an approved hardhat
2. The operator shall wear safety glasses or goggles that provide eye protection
3. The operator shall wear hearing protection
4. An approved forestry helmet may be used in place of wearing a hardhat, safety glasses, and ear protection
5. The operator shall wear chainsaw safety chaps
6. The operator shall wear gloves
7. The operator shall wear sturdy, fully enclosed work boots
8. To prevent accidents caused by moving chains, it is imperative that the operator have their protective clothing completely buttoned up, and that no other individual is within the kickback zone of the chainsaw
9. When cutting trees or limbs, plan an escape route before starting to cut and remain observant to changing conditions

**Emergency Equipment**

The following safety equipment shall be available when a chainsaw is being used:

1. Fire extinguisher or hoseline
2. Trauma/first aid kit
3. Communication device (radio or cell phone)

**Before Starting the Saw**

* Conduct pre-start checks
* Place the chainsaw at suitable working height
* Ensure chain is sharpened and tensioned as per manufacturer’s specifications
* Clean and check the condition of the air filter, sprocket covers and grill on fan housing
* Check for loose parts
* Examine chain throw stop for proper operation
* Ensure chain catcher is in place and ant-vibration mountings are in good condition
* Ensure all cover bolts are tight
* Top up the fuel and oil reservoirs and clean all traces of fuel and oil from saw
* Ensure chain brake mechanism is in good condition

**Safety Precautions**

* No fire department personnel shall operate a chainsaw until they have received proper instruction on the use of a chainsaw and demonstrated practical ability to inspect, start, operate, and maintain the chainsaw
* Operating a chainsaw above chest height is extremely hazardous and should not be done as a normal course of action
* Do not overreach when operating a chainsaw
* Never operate a chainsaw with just one hand on the saw
* Never operate a chainsaw from an unstable platform
* The use of a chainsaw from a ladder shall only be done if no other alternatives are available
* Never operate chainsaws in flammable or explosive atmospheres
* Never refuel a chainsaw with a hot engine
* If fuel spills on the saw, wipe it off before starting the chainsaw

**Starting and Using the Chainsaw**

* Place chainsaw on cleared area on the ground away from other personnel and close to the job
* Check that the choke and throttle controls are set correctly
* Place the right foot through the rear handle and left hand on the front handle with left thumb under front handle
* Kneel on left knee to help brace chainsaw and to avoid bending
* Operate starter with right hand while keeping clear of the running chain
* Apply chain brake when motor runs
* Use both hands to hold and operate the chainsaw, with top hand thumb under front handle
* Always stand with secure footing and stance
* Avoid twisting the bar when cutting
* Apply the chain brake when cut is complete
* Start cutting with chainsaw chain rotating at full speed and spike bumper in contact with the wood
* To avoid kick-back, do not saw with the tip, and keep the tip away from other objects
* Avoid low engine revolutions while cutting, particularly when the bar tip is covered by timber.
* Check chain tension and sharpness regularly
* Turn off the saw before leaving it unattended
* Carry the chainsaw with the engine off, the bar pointed behind you, and the muffler away from your body
* Turn the chainsaw off before hoisting or lowering the saw

**After Use**

Allow the engine to cool

Make certain that all safety guards are in place

Clean and fuel the chainsaw as per the above procedures

Store the chainsaw in its designated storage space on the apparatus