

safety Toolbox Talks for matters

From your safety partners at Cluett Commercial Insurance Agency, Inc.

Using Small Equipment Safely in Landscaping

Lawn mowers, chain saws, leaf blowers, trimming equipment and grinders are all examples of small equipment used in landscaping. This equipment can cause injuries if it is not used properly. Common landscaping injuries include the following:

- Cuts, lacerations or amputations from fast-moving mower blades
- Bruises or broken bones from flying objects
- Burns from hot equipment parts
- Electrical shock from faulty grounding or defective electrical cords
- Back strain from improper equipment usage
- Slips, trips and falls

To avoid injuries when using small equipment while landscaping, follow these guidelines from OSHA and the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) Alliance.

- Read and understand the operator's manual for the equipment you're using.
- If you have not been trained on a piece of equipment, do not use it! This is critical to your safety.
- Make sure all safety guards are in place and the equipment is in good working order. Do not alter or remove safety guards.

- Always wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE). Eye and ear protection are especially important.
- Clothing should fit well and be free of dangling or ragged edges that can become tangled in controls or fast-moving parts.
- Don't use equipment when someone walks by. Aim blowers away from cars, people and houses. Flying debris can cause injuries.
- Don't operate small equipment when it's dark and you have limited visibility.
- Turn off equipment when it's not in use.
- Allow equipment to cool off before refueling.
- Never smoke when fueling a piece of equipment.
- Disconnect spark plug wires before performing maintenance.
- Keep your hands on the handles of all hedge trimmers and do not reach up into plants to clear debris until trimmers are shut off.
- Keep hands and feet away from mower chutes and blades.
- When using chain saws, make sure the chain brake works and the chain tension is correct.

If you have not been trained on a piece of equipment, do not use it! This is critical to your safety and the safety of your co-workers.

