Chainsaw Operations

(Safety Brief)

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PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Chainsaws are commonly used in roadway maintenance operations and during storm clean-up operations. These are potentially very hazardous tools, and require practice, training and the use of personal protective equipment. Consider that a chain at full throttle is traveling at over 50 mph!

Injuries can be catastrophic when the saw is in operation and lacerations are possible even when the chain is at rest. Additionally, trees and limbs pose serious injury risks and require awareness and proper planning to avoid injury. Lastly, don't forget that the Scholarship program can pay for the "Game of Logging" to give your crew high quality hands-on training

Talking Points for Training

Planning & Preparation:

1. The correct personal protective equipment must be used every time an employee operates a chainsaw. This includes: a hardhat; hearing protection; eye protection; gloves; boots; and chaps. All equipment should be reasonably clean, inspected, and in serviceable condition. Chaps with nicks or cuts should be replaced.
2. Size up the tree or limb to be cut. Identify points under tension, potential fall direction and check for overhead hazards such as dead branches, limbs, leaners,

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etc. and address as appropriate.

3. Plan the cut, know the location of co-workers and communicate the drop plan. Consider the terrain and footing, and ensure the cutting area is clear from trip hazards. Plan an escape route and clear the path.
4. Before starting the saw, check the chain tension, condition of the teeth and rakers and apply the brake. Always start the saw on the ground, placing your foot in the trigger grip area. “Drop starting” the saw is a safety hazard and is not permitted.
5. Make sure fueling and bar oil fill-up is done when the saw is off. If it is hot from use, let it cool down prior to fueling. Smoking is prohibited!

Cutting

1. Keep both hands firmly on the saw at all times. Keep wedges handy and use as needed to guide the tree to the drop path.
2. When moving and cutting brush or limbing, ALWAYS engage the brake BEFORE taking a step. This should be a habit!
3. Beware of kickback potential. Do not cut with the tip of the bar. The saw reacts differently depending on forces pinching the bar and chain and where on the bar you are making the cut.
4. When doing tree removal or limbing in or near the roadway, make sure appropriate traffic controls are in place and that advance warning signage is used. For short term tasks, consider placing “advance warning” cones in locations with poor lines of site. This reduces liability risk to the municipality. Wear “high-vis” vests and make sure the vehicle’s amber strobes are on.

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer: Training Date:

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1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.
4.	12.
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7.	15.
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