

# Safetyline

Apartment Association of Michigan

## Benefits

Member

Membership in the Apartment Association carries benefits beyond savings on Work Comp insurance. Members join a network of their peers; thus gaining access to information sharing and the tools needed for effective loss control.

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## Seemingly Simple Act Of Tree Trimming Calls For Numerous Safety Protocols

*Editor's Note: We encourage all of our members to use this information as a starting point for effective safety communication. Members should add to it based on their safety needs and work environments.*

"The falling leaves drift by my window. The falling leaves of red and gold." These lyrics by Johnny Mercer elicit different images for different people. Mercer probably wanted to summon a kind of romantic moodiness that can be tied to autumn. Darker days played out against the blaze of color the season brings.

These darker days also signal a shift in the rhythm for lawn and maintenance crews. There is the standard stuff like cleaning flowerbeds and raking leaves, but many arborists consider autumn to be the

best time to prune deciduous trees and shrubs. There are a couple of reasons for this. Not only are trees dormant, but after leaf fall it's easier to see the basic shape of a tree, which makes for easier corrective or cosmetic pruning.

A whole host of safety issues goes hand-in-hand with tree trimming and pruning. Chain saws, edgers and backpack blowers all carry their own special safety protocols.

Besides being outfitted for the inclemency of the weather, workers need appropriate footwear and gloves.

Don't overlook safety glasses for eye protection and earplugs to reduce the decibels of power equipment.

## Personal Protective Equipment; A Safety Must Have

The best way to avoid injuries is to eliminate the hazards whenever possible; replacing hazardous materials with less hazardous alternatives.

In some cases, however, you cannot eliminate the hazard altogether and you must use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to guard against injuries.

Before using any PPE, always refer to the manufacturer's operating manual to learn safety precautions and potential

dangers of that piece of equipment.

Examples of PPE, and when to use them, include:

- Eye protectors when operating powered tools, power tilling and breaking rocks or concrete by hand using a pick.
- Sunglasses when working in direct sunlight.
- Sunscreen with a high SPF factor, even when it's cloudy.
- Face shields when using trimmers, brush cutters and chippers.
- Hearing protectors when

working in noisy environments or operating gas powered equipment.

- Respirators when applying pesticides, painting or welding.
- Safety footwear, such as steel toe boots, if lifting heavy objects or working around heavy equipment.
- Hardhats when trimming trees.
- Insulated gloves when using vibrating equipment.

For certain tasks, you must use more than one type of PPE for safety.



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To receive a copy of Safetyline, contact Brenda Boomer at [bboomer@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bboomer@spsinsurance.com), or access it online at: [www.apartments.org](http://www.apartments.org)

# Don't Go Out On A Limb When It Comes To Safety

## General Rules. Gasoline Powered Chain Saws, Weed Whips, Edgers and Backpack Blowers:

- Wear safety glasses, a dust mask, earplugs and closed toe shoes when operating any chain saw, line trimmer, or any other gasoline powered lawn maintenance tool.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's routine and preventive maintenance schedule posted on the workshop wall.
- Do not use tools with parts that are loose, worn, cracked or otherwise visibly damaged.
- Do not alter or by-pass any safety device provided by the manufacturer.
- Use only the grip locations, as specified by the manufacturer, as handholds when operating the unit.
- Do not pour fuel into the tank of a running engine.
- Keep body parts and clothing away from the running engine and the cutting blade.
- Do not run a gasoline engine inside the storage shed.
- Stop the engine and disconnect the spark

plug wire before cleaning, inspecting, adjusting or repairing cutting blades or other rotating parts.

- Allow the engine to cool before covering or storing it in the storage shed.

## Chain Saws

- When transporting a chain saw by hand, stop the engine, grip the saw handle, place the muffler at the side away from your body and position the guide bar to the rear.
- Do not remove the chain brake or alter handles, chain brake, chain or covers.
- Always start a chain saw with a 10 inch or larger bar on the ground. Engage the chain brake, place one foot through the bottom handle, hold the top handle and pull the starter rope.
- Do not place a chain saw on your knee when starting it.
- Always use both hands to maintain control of the chain saw.
- When moving from tree to tree or cut to cut, activate the chain brake, remove your finger from the trigger and keep the bar away from your body.
- Do not operate a chain saw above your shoulder height.
- To prevent kickback, keep the nose of the bar clear of other nearby objects during cutting.
- Do not set a saw down while the blade is engaged.
- Stop the engine and turn the switch to "OFF" when the chain

saw is to be left unattended.

## Hand Saws

- Keep control of saws by releasing downward pressure at the end of the stroke.
- Do not use a saw that has dull saw blades.
- Oil saw blades after each use.
- Keep hands and fingers away from the saw blade while using the saw.
- Do not carry a saw by the blade.
- Return saws, clippers, and other cutting tools to their sheaths or guarded storage place after use.

## Edging

- Do not start an edger with the blade touching the ground.
- Do not allow anyone to stand in front of or on the unguarded side of the blade while the edger is in operation.
- Operate the edger at full blade speed.
- When edging along roads, driveways or parking lots, stay as close to the curb as possible.

## Line Trimming/Weed Eaters or Brushcutters

- Before refueling, remove the trimmer from your harness, place the trimmer on the ground and allow the engine to cool.

## Backpack Blowers

- Do not use the blower to clean yourself.
- Do not direct the blower toward bystanders.

## Lawn Maintenance Personnel Hedge and Tree Trimming

- Wear long sleeves, long pants and gardening gloves when trimming hedges or when picking up cuttings from thorny shrubs.
- If you discover a bee hive or wasp nest while hedging or trimming, use the long distance aerosol insecticide labeled "Wasp and Bee Insecticide" to spray the nest. Test with a stick or pole to ensure that all bees or wasps are gone before continuing work.
- Seek first aid immediately if bitten or stung by wasps or bees.
- Do not handle caterpillars or other insects with your bare hands.
- Do not wear dangling jewelry while using hedge clippers.
- Position yourself so that your hedge and tree cutting movements are performed below your shoulder level.
- Do not break branches, sticks or twigs over your legs or knees or under your feet. Use clippers, shears or a saw to cut them.
- Do not perform trimming of a limb if the limb is within 10 ft. of power lines.
- Do not leave saws, clippers, shovels, rakes, and other equipment lying around in the work area.

# SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ JOB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Tree Trimming And Removal

### Avoid Electrical Hazards

- Assume all power lines are energized; contact the utility company to discuss de-energizing and grounding or shielding power lines.
- Do NOT perform trimming or removal within 10 feet of a power line if you are not an experienced line-clearance tree trimmer.
- Never work without a second trimmer in range of your voice.
- Know and maintain the proper minimum approach distances when working around energized power lines.
- Use extreme caution when moving ladders and equipment around downed trees and power lines.

### Stay Alert and Aware

- Watch for and do not work in dangerous weather conditions.
- Before working, perform a hazard assessment of the work area.
- Eliminate or minimize hazards at the tree and its surroundings.
- Never turn your back on a falling tree.
- Be alert and avoid objects thrown back by a tree as it falls.
- Inspect tree limbs for strength and stability before climbing.

### Use Proper Technique

- Operate chain saws or other equipment only if you are trained and the equipment is properly maintained.
- Use personal protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, hard hats, hearing protection, etc., as recommended in the manufacturer's operating manual.
- Determine the proper amount of hinge wood needed to safely guide the tree's fall, and plan a retreat path to a safe location.
- When working at an elevation, use appropriate fall protection.
- Do not climb with tools in your hands.
- If a broken tree is under pressure, determine the direction of the pressure and make small cuts to relieve it.
- Use extreme care when felling a tree that is lodged against another tree.

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR YOUR PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting attended by:

_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
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_____	_____
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Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this page to the head of your safety team

# Talk To Us

## MEMBER BENEFIT

Loss control seminars are designed to enhance existing safety programs. They also bring members new information for our changing industry and heighten our collective safety awareness.

TO DATE WE HAVE PROVIDED OUR MEMBERS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT:

- Return To Work Programs
- Proper Claims Reporting
- Swimming Pool Chemical Safety
- Violence In The Workplace

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Topics You Would Like To See Offered At Future Seminars:

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Send your suggestions to Brenda Boomer at [bboomer@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bboomer@spsinsurance.com)



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