

Landscaping – General Fact Sheet



WHAT ARE SOME GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS WHEN LANDSCAPING?

- Educate and train workers to ensure that they understand all of the job hazards and can handle tools and equipment safely.
- If you are the worker, report unsafe working conditions or equipment to your supervisor.
- Rest periodically during strenuous jobs such as digging or sawing: work-rest schedules vary according to temperature conditions, how strenuous the work is, and how acclimatized ("used to") the worker is to the workload.
- Make sure emergency telephone numbers are clearly posted or readily available.
- Know the location of the first aid kit and how to use the contents.
- Identify and destroy harmful or noxious plants such as poison ivy.
- Protect against insects with insect repellents or protective clothing when needed.
- Use caution in areas where you may encounter wild animals or unfriendly domestic ones.
- Carry a 'bee sting' kit if there is a chance of a severe allergic reaction to an insect sting. Alert your supervisor and the employer to make sure co-workers are trained to assist.
- Do not touch stray or dead animals or birds. Contact an animal control or wildlife agency for removal. In some cases, your local public health authority may need to be contacted.
- Wear respiratory protection if you must clean up waste, leaves or dust that may contain mouse or bird droppings. Mice can carry the hantavirus which can become airborne with dust and may be inhaled by workers. Bird droppings can carry a microorganism that may cause psittacosis – a flu-like illness.
- All outdoor workers should be aware of Lyme disease. Determine if ticks that spread the disease are in your area. Get medical assistance if you think you have been bitten by a tick.
- Outdoor workers should also be aware of West Nile virus. West Nile virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito.
- Be aware of expected weather conditions for the day, and plan accordingly. Have plans about where to go if severe weather hits. Know where to seek shelter in a thunderstorm (such as fully enclosed metal vehicles, with windows up or a building (not sheds)).
- Learn proper hand washing techniques. Wash your hands thoroughly after working or using pesticides, before eating, using the washroom, or changing tasks (using different tools and/or different locations).
- Take regular rest breaks. Frequent short pauses are better than longer breaks further apart. In warm weather, take breaks in areas that are cooled, such as inside a vehicle (with the air conditioning running), or in shade where possible. Similarly, in cold weather, take breaks in areas that are warm.

- When working in the heat and sun, consider working where there is shade, or create shade by setting up a shade tent.

What are some tips for Personal Protective Equipment when landscaping?

- Wear CSA certified personal protective equipment, including:
- High-cut safety footwear with toe caps and reinforced, non-skid soles.
- Head protection when working under branches or where there may be falling objects.
- Appropriate eye protection (safety glasses or goggles) whenever dust or debris may get into your eyes (e.g., when power tilling, breaking up rocks or concrete) or when using strong cleaning agents, spraying or dusting.
- Hearing protection devices (e.g., ear muffs, ear plugs) that provide appropriate protection from noise produced by equipment being used
- Wear sturdy, well-fitting gloves with grip.
- Use vibration-absorbing gloves while operating vibrating equipment.
- Wear suitable chemical-resistant gloves when handling fertilizers and pesticides and other chemicals.
- Wear lightweight long pants (vs. shorts) and long-sleeved shirts to help protect against both ultraviolet radiation (UV), and ticks or other insects.
- Protect yourself from the sun's UV radiation – use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and re-apply sunscreen as required throughout the day. Consider wearing lightweight long pants (vs. shorts) and long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear a brimmed hat and comfortable clothing that provides sun protection.
- Wear sunglasses that filter out the sun's ultraviolet rays.
- Do not wear loose-fitting or torn clothing that may become entangled in moving equipment.

What are some general tips for using landscaping tools?

Tool selection/maintenance

- Select the tool that is most suitable for you to do the task safely (i.e., select the right tool for the job).
- Use spark-resistant tools if working near highly flammable materials (gas, liquid or vapour).
- Inspect your tools daily – make sure that tools are in good repair.
- Ensure all guards and shields for your equipment are in place, and are properly maintained.
- Ensure that handles are tight and fastened securely. Repair or replace worn or damaged handles. Make sure that the handle surfaces are smooth and sliver-free.
- Keep cutting tools and equipment sharp. Dull tools are more hazardous than sharp ones.
- Protect the cutting edges of the tools and equipment. Store tools and equipment, especially if they are transported regularly from job to job, in a way that prevents the cutting edges from being dulled or damaged.
- Label damaged tools and remove them from the work site.

Use:

- Stand on a non-slippery surface and in a non-cluttered area. It's important to keep a secure footing and your balance when using tools.
- Use tools on a stable work surface. Use a vice or clamps to stabilize your work if necessary.
- Work in a well-lit area.
- Direct saw blades, knives, etc. away from aisle areas and from co-workers working nearby.
- Avoid standing in awkward positions. Avoid unnecessary strains on your wrists, arms, shoulders and/or back from poorly designed tools.

- Give yourself enough space to work and keep your body at a comfortable angle to the work. Adjust the tool position or the angle of the work surface to minimize bending, reaching or twisting.
- Carry tools properly.
- Use a tool belt, but don't make it too heavy causing strain on your lower back and hips. Carry only what is necessary for that particular task.
- Block machinery securely so it cannot roll or shift when repairs are being made.
- Use a piece of cardboard to test hydraulic hoses for leaks. Always shut off the engine before servicing a hydraulic system.
- Never inspect hydraulic hoses with your bare hands. Even pinhole leaks have enough force to penetrate skin with hydraulic fluid. Get medical attention immediately if this happens.

Storage:

- Put tools away when the job is finished. Removing dirt and ensuring they are dry will help prevent tools from rusting.
- Store tools and equipment in a safe, organized manner so that workers can access them easily and without injury. If stored in a truck, van, etc., they should be stored securely so they do not fall or shift position during transport.
- While tools are not in use, place them where other workers cannot be hurt by them. (For example, do not leave rakes on the ground with the tines pointing up. Do not leave tools on a ladder or scaffold.)

What are general safety tips for using electric powered hand tools?

- Read, understand and follow the manufacturer's operating manual.
- Use only approved electrical tools (e.g., approved by CSA, or other recognized certification organization).

What are some general tips for fuelling equipment?

DO:

- Fill the fuel tank before starting a job.
- Shut off the engine and allow it to cool before refuelling the tank. Do not smoke when refuelling!
- Remove the fuel cap slowly, holding it at the semi-locked position until the pressure is released.
- Position yourself comfortably so that you can fuel without slipping or falling.
- Use a funnel to prevent fuel spillage on the engine when refuelling. Fuel up outdoors, then wipe up all spills.
- Allow the nozzle to empty by keeping it in the filler opening for a few moments after the fuel flow is shut off.
- Check that any vents are not clogged. Replace the fuel cap.
- Restart engine at least 8 metres (25 feet) from where you refuelled to avoid igniting vapours.
- Store fuel in sturdy, approved containers identified according to WHMIS requirements. Store gasoline safely – outside and away from any heat source.
- Have fire extinguishers and other firefighting equipment nearby.

DO NOT:

Do not smoke or have an open flame while fuelling. Gas fumes are heavier than air and will drift downward from the container. It is the vapour, not the liquid, which burns.

Do not spill any fuel on equipment. If you do, wipe up and allow any residue to dry before starting the engine.

Do not run if your clothing catches fire. Stop, drop and roll. Quickly remove the

clothing that is on fire, or drop to the ground and roll slowly, or wrap yourself in a blanket.

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