# Leaf Blowers – Landscaping Meeting Kit

## WHAT'S AT STAKE

Leaf blowers have been banned in some jurisdictions, because of their high noise levels. Most backpack models produce noise levels greater than 90 dBA.

## WHAT'S THE DANGER

Leaf blowers can cause projectiles or "thrown objects" resulting in eye injuries. Common hazards in leaf blower operations include:

- Overuse injuries from carrying an awkward weight
- Cuts and contusions from projectiles
- Burns during refuelling and from touching hot points
- Hearing damage due to Prolonged noise exposure

**Incident example**

- A worker was hit in the eye and suffered a scratched cornea when she was struck by debris thrown by her leaf blower. She was not wearing eye protection.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**Initial Leaf Blower Safety Checklist**

- Make sure you are familiar with the leaf blower and its safe use before you start.
- Make sure you are not fatigued or under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including hearing protection and safety eyewear or a face shield. Use a respirator if the work area is dusty or dirty, or if it could have mould spores, mouse droppings, or bird droppings.
- Wear full-length, close-fitting clothing.

**On the Job**

- Look to see if anyone else is in or around the work area. Never assume people will stay where you last saw them. Use extreme care when approaching blind corners, trees, or other visual obstacles.
- Only work in daylight.
- Ensure good footing and balance while operating the leaf blower. Never work from ladders, trees, or rooftops.
- Adjust the harness and hand grips to suit your build and work positions.
- Use the leaf blower at ground level only. Direct the discharge away from people,

animals, and solid objects that could cause material to ricochet.
- Stop the motor before putting the leaf blower down, or if anyone enters the area.

**Refuelling**

- Refuel outdoors on the ground.
- Allow the engine to cool before refuelling.
- Extinguish all ignition sources (for example, cigarettes).
- Use only an approved gasoline container in good condition.
- Keep the nozzle in contact with the fuel tank.
- If you spill fuel on your clothing, change immediately.
- Never overfill the tank.
- Replace the cap and tighten it securely.

**Responsibilities of Employers**

- Maintain and repair leaf blowers.
- Train workers on the safe use of blowers before they start work.
- Demonstrate how to adjust, hold, and use the blower.
- Demonstrate how the safety features work (for example, guards, shields, and automatic releases), and instruct workers not to remove any of these features.
- Remind workers about the PPE they are required to wear.
- Provide adequate supervision after training.

## FINAL WORD

Employers must continually be on the look out at all times to ensure that back pact models of leaf blowers do not produce noise levels greater than 90 dBA.