

# Safe chainsaw use

## Equipment to keep operators safe

### Personal protective equipment recommendations

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the last line of defence against injury in hazardous work environments. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is typically the primary reference. A workplace risk assessment should be completed to identify the appropriate PPE for the task and specific conditions.

Proper PPE for chainsaw users consists of the following elements:

- **Head protection:** CSA or ANSI approved head protection must be worn. It must be in good condition and highly visible. Head protection that is cracked, deeply scratched, or damaged must be replaced.
- **Hearing protection** like ear plus or earmuffs are to be used. Choose the appropriate hearing protection (single or double) that fits appropriately and reduces noise to acceptable levels.
- **Safety glasses:** CSA-approved safety glasses ensure adequate protection from flying debris.
- **Face screen:** Use a forestry face screen that attaches to the hardhat. It is breathable, yet still protects against chips and whiplash from branches.
- **High visibility clothing:** Workers must have (at minimum) a high-visibility shirt, vest, or jacket meeting the CSA Z96 standard. Clothing must have reflective stripes if working in low-light conditions. Coveralls may also be used if they meet the standard. Avoid mesh-style vests, as they are not effective for high-visibility from long distances and can get caught on branches.
- **Chainsaw gloves/mitts:** Gloves or mitts must be leather-palmed, cut-resistant, and highly visible.
- **Chainsaw pants/chaps:** Use Class A with 3,600 FPM full-front protection from the groin to the ankle, with supporting protection on the back of the leg from the middle of the knees to the ankles.

Beware of repairing PPE. Exercise care when sewing torn cutter pants. Do not sew into the protective Kevlar padding. The fibre must remain loosely woven or it will not stop a chainsaw.

- **Footwear:** CSA-approved boots with hard-toe caps, ankle supports, cut-resistant insteps, and a good tread pattern are to be used. There are boots with a white patch and green tree label, which are designed specifically for protection when using a chainsaw.

For more information and support, [contact Workplace Safety North](#).