



Chipper Operations and Best Work Practices

One of the very first tasks that a person on a tree crew is responsible for is moving brush and feeding a chipper. Being responsible for a chipper and safe operations is all too often underestimated. To do so safely and productively is actually a big responsibility!

Traffic control around a job site must be established prior to the start of chipper operations along roads and highways. Brush and logs must not be allowed to create hazards in the work areas.

In order to prevent any type of entanglement, loose clothing, climbing equipment, body belts, harnesses, lanyards, or gauntlet-type gloves must not be worn while operating chippers.

Training should always be provided for all personnel that will be involved in chipper operation. Feeding, starting, and shutdown procedures for all chippers is a very important part of its operation. Maintenance should only be performed by those persons authorized by the employer and trained to perform maintenance operations.

Brush and logs should always be fed into chippers with the butt end first and from the side of the feed table centerline. The operator should turn immediately away from the feed table once the brush is taken by the rotor or feed rollers. Chippers should be fed from the curbside whenever possible.

Brush chipper discharge chutes or cutter housing covers must not be raised, open or removed while any part of the chipper is turning or moving. Chippers should not be used unless the discharge chute is of sufficient length or some type of design is provided that prevents personal contact with the blades.

Foreign materials, like stones, nails, sweepings, and rakings, should never be fed into chippers. Small branches should be fed into chippers with longer branches or by pushing them in with a long stick. Hands and other parts of the body should not be placed into the in feed hopper when a chipper is running. Pushing or kicking material into infeed chipper hoppers with feet is dangerous and prohibited.

Whenever material is being fed into the chipper in feed hopper chute, pinch points are continually developing within the material being chipped and between the material and machine. The operator needs to be aware of this situation and behave accordingly.

When feeding a chipper along a roadside, the operator and other workers responsible for feeding chipping brush must do so in a manner that prevents him or her from stepping into traffic or being pushed into traffic by the material that is being fed into the chipper. When using a winch for chipper operations, the operator must be sure that the winch cable is properly stored before feeding the chipper.

A brush chipper is one of the most valuable and important assets that a tree company and/or a tree crew has available to it. A brush chipper is only as good as its operator or operators and this responsibility should never be underestimated!

Please, chip safe and we'll see you back at the shop;-)

Ken Palmer, ArborMaster® Inc.