

 <b>DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY</b>  <b>Facilities Management Bush Cutters / Grass Trimmers Safe Work Instructions</b>	<i>Policy Sponsor:</i> Assistant Vice President Facilities Management	<i>Approval Date:</i> January 2010
	<i>Responsible Unit:</i> Facilities Management	<i>Revisions:</i>
<b>Service:</b> Environmental Services	<b>Shop:</b> Grounds and Horticulture	
<b>Hazards Identified:</b>  Hand slipping on hand grip, vibration, noise, hot hand grip, flying projectiles, pinch points, contact with solid obstructions, fire or explosion, contact with hazards products or fumes, over exertion in maintaining cutting rate, slippery or uneven terrain.		
<b>Personal Protective Equipment Required:</b>  Safety boots, hard hat, safety goggles or safety glasses with side shields or a face shield, hearing protection, long trousers, safety gloves with rubber pads on palms, dust mask, sunscreen		
<b>Training Required:</b>  Before using this type of equipment employees must be trained by a competent person in its proper use and care. The operator's manual, tool safety markings and instructions for manufacturer approved attachments must be understood by the operator and reviewed regularly. Employees must be trained in the proper use and maintenance of all required PPE before operating this equipment.		

These safe work practices must be followed at all times and are to be reviewed annually.

1. Only qualified employees are allowed to operate this equipment.
2. Keep the equipment well secured when transporting in a vehicle to avoid fuel spillage and damage to the equipment.
3. Keep cutter blades covered with the carrying guard when transporting the equipment between work sites.

4. Visually check the area where you will be working and clear away stones, sticks, wire and other loose objects.
5. Ensure that people stay back at least 15 metres from the area where you are working.
6. Make sure the brushcutter / whipper snipper is the right tool for the task at hand.
7. Before each use check the handles and grips to ensure they are free of oil, grit, moisture, grass build up, etc.
8. Check that the cutting blade or cord is not bent, cracked, dull or worn.
9. Always check the trimmer to ensure it is in good operating condition before starting work.
10. Check low and high throttle speed positions for proper operation.
11. Check to ensure the throttle springs back to the idle position.
12. Replace damaged cutting blades or cord and worn mounting components.
13. Ensure the safety harness is adjusted so that your shoulders, arms and hands are relaxed and your back is straight.
14. Do not wear short pants or shirts with short sleeves. Wear sturdy long pants and long sleeve shirts.
15. Only start work if sure there will be enough daylight for the duration of work.
16. Ensure the correct string length is used. (See manufacturer's specifications.)
17. Always follow the safe work practices for refueling small engines.

## Operation

1. Know the location of all controls and how to operate them. Know how to stop the equipment quickly.
2. Start the unit in an open area and ensure that you have firm footing. Make sure the cutting tool is clear of you and any obstructions.
3. Always remember that this type of rotating cutting tool can throw objects that come in contact with the cutter blade or cutting string.
4. During use, hold the trimmer securely with both hands.
5. Adjust the support harness and hand grip to suit your personal needs before starting work.
6. Always maintain proper footing and good balance when operating this equipment. Never overreach when cutting.
7. Always take extra care on slopes and / or when working conditions are wet and slippery.
8. Always make sure that your path is clear before moving in any direction.
9. Only use this equipment to cut at ground level. Never cut above 6" (15 cm) from the ground.
10. Regularly check the cutter blade of a brush cutter to ensure that it is tight and not damaged.
11. Replace damaged, bent or dull cutter blades.
12. Shut off the equipment if anyone comes within a 15 meter radius of where you are working.
13. Do not use cutter blades when working in rocky areas or near large solid objects.
14. Always stop the engine before putting the trimmer down.
15. Do not leave the equipment unattended if it is running.
16. Always stop and turn off the engine if you hit something with the cutting attachment.
17. Do not start to work again until you have checked the cutter for damage and ensure that it is in good working condition.

18. Do not use the cutter / trimmer if it is making unusual noises or is vibrating excessively.
19. If the cutter / trimmer is damaged tag it as such and remove it from service. Report the situation to your supervisor immediately.
20. Always shut the equipment off before you attempt to clean or dislodge items from around the cutting head.
21. Never modify a trimmer in any way. Use only manufacturer approved attachments.
22. Never operate a trimmer that does not have a properly mounted deflector. Ensure that guards are in place.
23. Never use the starting throttle lock to run a trimmer.
24. Do not use a grass cutting tool with an incorrect idle adjustment.
25. Do not attempt to cut any material other than those for which the cutting tool is intended.
26. Never use wire or wire reinforced line as a substitute for the proper nylon cutting lines.
27. Never operate this equipment if you are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication.
28. Change jobs with a fellow employee or take short breaks every 30 minutes to prevent health issues associated with equipment vibration.
29. Service and replace defective parts as required.
30. Always clean the cutter / trimmer when you are finished your work.
31. Store the cutter / trimmer in a well ventilated place.
32. Return any left over gasoline to the flammables storage cabinet.