

EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

Safely using a Snow Blower

The goal of this Safety Talk is to reduce the number of worker injury incidents while using a snow blower. The most common commercial snow blowers are gas but some are electric or battery powered. They are usually heavy and cumbersome to move around.

During the winter season, removing snow is often necessary. The potential for musculoskeletal injury is high if they are not used properly. While not as strenuous as manual shoveling, using a snow blower is still physical in nature. Please consider the following when planning proper snow removal procedures.

Safety Tips

Ensure you are Fit for Duty. Maintain your **health and wellness** at all times. Come to work **well rested, hydrated** and **fed**. Staying physically **fit for the job, warming up** your muscles prior to work, and taking a **short break** when you become fatigued will go a long way towards preventing strains.

Dress in appropriate layers for the temperatures and conditions. Wear appropriate **safety gear**, including safety glasses with side shields, adequate hearing protection and protective boots. It is also important to wear suitable head coverings, gloves, and warm socks. Avoid falls by wearing boots that have slip-resistant soles or cleats in good condition.

Take regular breaks - stand up straight, walk around, and **drink water** to avoid dehydration. Listen to your body. Pay attention to your body's signals, such as pains, shortness of breath, and chest discomfort.

Read the instruction manual prior to using a snow blower. Ensure the equipment has appropriate guards and you are familiar with the specific safety hazards and features. Do not use a snow blower until you have received training and are authorized by your supervisor to do so.

Ensure the **area is safe to work in**, be aware of your environment and surroundings, including slope and surfaces (e.g. gravel). Do not discharge snow towards people, buildings or vehicles. In some cases, the area may need to be roped off. Be aware of moving machines (including ski lifts).

Do not start or operate the machine in an **enclosed area**.

NEVER stick your hands in the snow blower! If snow jams the snow blower, stop the engine and wait at least 5 seconds for the motor to stop. Use a solid object – never your hand - to clear wet snow or debris from the chute. Beware that the blades can rotate and cut even when the machine is turned off.

Do not attempt to repair or maintain the snow blower without reading the **instruction manual** and without authorization and training to do so. Do not remove safety devices, shields or guards on switches, and keep hands and feet away from sharp or moving parts.

Disconnect the spark plug when moving or working on the machine.

Do not leave the snow blower unattended when it is running. **Shut off the engine** if you must walk away from the machine.

Never add **fuel** when the engine is running or while it is hot. Add fuel before starting the snow blower or after waiting sufficient time for the engine to cool down after use.

Do not operate a snow blower if you have a history of heart troubles or are unfit to do so. The machine does much of the work, but your body still has to work hard to move it around. This can cause undue strain on your body if you are not used to this type of work.

Additional Resources

- Your ski area policy and procedures.
- [CCOHS: Snow Blowers](#)
- Ski Safety Talk: Snow Shoveling
- More Ski Area Safety Resources: go2hr.ca/skisafety