

SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE

Task/Equipment Description: Hedge Trimmer (electric)
















Potential Hazards and Risks:

- Exposed moving parts, entanglement
- Cuts and lacerations
- Burns, hot material, sources of ignition, possible fire
- Impact injuries, ejected material
- Sparks, noxious fumes, chemicals, fuel
- Harmful dust, debris, and projectiles
- Slips, trips, and falls
- Hazardous noise
- Striking wires or electrical hazards
- Electrical power supply hazards
- Vibration and manual handling hazards
- Outdoor elements

DO NOT use this equipment unless you have been trained in its safe use and operation.

Required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

	Gloves	Hearing Protection	Head Protection	Eye Protection	Eye (UV) Protection	Safety Footwear	FaceVisor / Welding	Dust Mask	Half Face Mask (P2)	Breathing Apparatus	Hi-Vis Apparel	Full Body Clothing	Harness
PPE													
	✓	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other PPE (describe):

- Long hair, loose hair, loose clothing, jewellery must be contained, PPE and any protective clothing must be closely fitted and not loose fitting.

ALWAYS

Check the hedge trimmer for damage prior to cutting tasks

Check the work area for trip hazards remove them prior to operation.

Ensure required PPE is utilised

Ensure the blade is in a good condition and appropriate for the task before starting

Ensure all guards are fitted, secure and functional

NEVER

Never operate without suitable training or supervision

Never remove or alter safety guarding

Never allow unauthorised persons within the vicinity of the cutting task

Never leave the hedge trimmer running unattended

Never use or leave unattended in rain or wet conditions

This document does not replace training; it is provided as a guide to the safe use of this type of equipment. Refer to the manufacturer's manual or training documents for further information. This is a non-specific document and must be assessed against your particular brand of equipment and the working environment. Where necessary a Task Specific Risk Assessment should be undertaken.

Safe Operating Procedure:

1. Pre-Operation – Safety Checks:
 - Check that machine has been tested by an authorised person, and that a current inspection tag is fitted to the attached power lead at the plug end
 - Ensure power leads are secure and do not get wet
 - Run any leads in a manner which ensures they are not near the cutting zone, and minimise the risk of tripping
 - Machine should only be connected to a power circuit protected by a tested residual current device (RCD or safety switch)
 - Visually inspect the hedge trimmer prior to operation
 - Inspect the intended work area and ensure it is reasonably clear of obstructions
 - The operator must be suitably trained and experienced. Inexperienced operators must be supervised.
 - Ensure the tool is serviced and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions
 - **Ensure you are familiar with the operation of the ON/OFF starter**
 - Check that safety guards and other safety devices are installed and are operational
 - Secure loose items of clothing, tie back loose hair and remove items of jewellery prior to use
 - Plan regular rest breaks. Alternate tasks to reduce muscle fatigue and maintain concentration
 - Ensure you are wearing all task specific PPE including hearing protection when required for task
 - Identify areas of uneven ground and take extra care with footing to avoid slip/trips/falls. Do not work on slippery, wet, uneven, or unstable surfaces
 - Inspect the work area and remove foreign objects, check for electrical wires, garden stakes, water pipes, etc.
 2. Operation – Safety Procedure:
 - Restrict unauthorised access to the work area during operation
 - Never operate the hedge trimmer above shoulder height
 - Take care around spikey/thorny plants
 - Manage insect pests appropriately (spiders, wasps, ants etc.)
 - Always use both hands when operating a hedge trimmer
 - Never allow hands or body parts to come into contact with operating cutting blades. Keep one hand on the control handle and one hand on the front handle
 - Make sure you have firm and secure footing and hold the unit so that the cutting blades are always away from your body
 - Watch the cutting blades at all times - do not overreach or stretch to cut areas of the hedge that you cannot see. **Beware of hidden support trellis wire**
 - Stay alert and exercise control. Hold the trimmer with a firm grip and ensure you are well balanced
 - Maintain a neutral wrist position rather than twist your body and wrists into awkward positions
 - Alternate trimming between high and low areas to reduce strain
 - When possible share the task, or complete it in stages to prevent strain, sprain, muscle overuse and to minimise the effects of vibration and fatigue
 - Always remain with the hedge trimmer during operation, never leave running unattended
 - Turn off the machine when the task is completed
 - Note that the cutting blades continue to run for a short period after you let go of the throttle trigger. Maintain grip on machine until blade comes to a complete rest
 3. Post-Operation – Housekeeping:
 - Allow the engine to completely stop and disconnect from power prior to performing any maintenance work according to the user manual requirements
 - Leave the work area in a safe, clean, and tidy state.
 - Observe correct manual handling techniques when lifting and moving equipment
 - Ensure the hedge trimmer is stored safely and/or correctly secured for transport
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