

## SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE

### Task/Equipment Description: Hedge Trimmer (fuel)




#### 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
- 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)

PPE ✓	Gloves	Hearing Protection	Head Protection	Eye Protection	Eye (UV) Protection	Safety Footwear	FaceVisor / Welding	Dust Mask	Half Face Mask (P2)	Breathing Appartus	Hi-Vis Apparel	Full Body Clothing	Harness
													
	✓	<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"/>	<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 for purposes other than cutting hedges, shrubs and the like

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## Safe Operating Procedure:

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1. Pre-Operation – Safety Checks:
    - Check fuel and engine oil and top up with **correct fuel** if necessary. Ensure fuel tank cap is correctly fitted after refuelling
    - Ensure the hedge trimmer is completely shut down before fuelling or refuelling. Never remove the filler cap whilst the engine is running
    - Allow unit to cool prior to adding fuel
    - Add fuel in a well-ventilated area
    - Remove filler cap slowly to reduce the risk of burns from escaping gas and vapours
    - Refuel with a slow but steady flow
    - Wipe off any spilled fuel before restarting the engine
    - If fuel leaks are identified tag the hedge trimmer as out of service
    - Ensure that the SDS for the fuel is available
    - 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**
    - **Do not operate in the starting position – engine speed can not be controlled in this position**
    - 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 starting and 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
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3. Post-Operation – Housekeeping:
- **Switch off and allow the engine to completely cool before refuelling or performing any maintenance work according to the user manual requirements (eg grease and lube machine, clean air filter, check for loose nuts and bolts or screws, check fuel lines and gas tank for leaks, remove any clogging sawdust/leaves**
  - 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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