

Woodland Safety Checklist

Items considered essential for all trip into the woods have an * next to them. Not all of these items are necessary for every trip into the woods. Use your best judgement based on the planned length of your trip, what you'll be doing on your trip (hiking, cutting firewood, birding, spraying for nonnative invasives, etc.). Other items, such as a hard hat, hearing and eye protection, etc. may also be necessary for activities like using a chainsaw.

To do ahead of time:

- Prepare 2 itineraries
 - Leave one with a friend or family member
 - Leave one under the seat of your car
- Check weather conditions
 - Dress appropriately for weather and terrain*
 - Moisture wicking materials
 - Layers
 - Long pants
 - Closed-toe shoes
 - Socks (wool or synthetic, not cotton)
 - Hat
 - Jacket/gloves
 - Rain gear
 - Extra dry/warm clothes

To Pack

- Backpack*
- Food & Water*
 - Water – more than you think you'll need*
 - Water treatment system
 - Snacks*

Personal Hygiene

- Toilet paper
- Baby wipes
- Bug spray
- Sunscreen

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- First Aid Kit*

Gear

- Phone – fully charged*
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Journal – pen/pencil
- Sunglasses
- Headlamp
- Emergency shelter
- Matches
- Knife*
- Whistle
- Map
- Compass
- ID Books
- Warm blanket/thermal blanket

Chainsaw Safety Checklist

Recommended Safety Precautions to Reduce Risk of Injury or Death

- Front hand guard is in place.
- The chain brake feature is operating. This will aid in preventing kickback injury. The chain brake should be engaged when you are moving and not cutting.
- Throttle interlock is functioning to prevent unintended throttling.
- Chain catch peg (below sprocket) is present and functioning, should a chain break or fly loose.
- Spark arrestor is in place to prevent sparks from exiting the exhaust.
- Read the safety manual. Follow all recommended guidelines for using the chainsaw. If you don't have a manual, most are available online.
- Move away from any gas containers before starting the chainsaw.
- With the chainsaw on the ground, engage the chain brake, place one foot inside the rear hand guard, and pull straight upward.
- Disengage the chain break to maintain good throttle control.
- Wear all recommended PPE.

The following are recommended PPE for using a chainsaw:

- Feet: Steel-toed high-top boots with aggressive treads to protect you from slipping and to protect your feet from heavy loads.
- Legs: Clip-on chaps will do IF securely tightened to prevent slipping. Pants-style chaps are more expensive, but offer the best protection. Chaps should be made from ballistic nylon or Kevlar.
- Hands: Cut-resistant or leather gloves.
- Ears: Earplugs and/or earmuffs.
- Face and eyes: A full-face shield or safety goggles/safety glasses with side shields (wrap-around style) to cover your peripheral vision. This will protect your face and eyes from twigs and debris. Prescription glasses are NOT a substitute for goggles or eye wear.
- Head: A comfortable, properly-fitted hard hat to protect your head from small limbs and debris. Do not store your hardhat in the sun as it will become brittle over time. Also, do not place items between the inside netting and the roof of the hardhat. Hardhats are designed to deflect, not store, objects.

Now that you have taken care of yourself, take care of your chainsaw before heading out to the woods.

- Sharpen your chain with the proper file or sharpening system, or take your saw to a nearby service dealer. Sharpening a chain takes skill and doing it incorrectly can be worse than having a dull chain.
- If you see fine dust, notice the saw abnormally heating up, or the bar becoming extremely hot, you should stop. In time, this occurrence will shorten the life of your bar, chain, and eventually the saw.
- Be sure plenty of bar oil is getting onto the chain. Remove the bar and inspect the oil ports for debris that will prevent good oil flow – this WILL happen with nearly every lengthy use of the saw. Inspect the gear wheel inside where the chain feeds around for excessive wear as it may need replacing after excessive use.

Once in the woods, there are a few additional safety tips while operating the saw:

- Tell someone where you will be working with your chainsaw, especially if you go alone (which is not advisable).
- Look for overhead hazards such as dead limbs and trees hung up on others.
- Determine a safe felling direction for the tree and make corrections as needed based on the direction the tree is leaning. Have a safe escape route 45 degrees from the base of the tree you are cutting.
- Be sure children, pets, or bystanders are at least two tree lengths (or 150 feet) away when you are ready to begin cutting.
- Hold the saw with two hands with your bar grip hand in a fist fashion with your thumb under the bar, not alongside. This will help in the event of kickback.
- Kickback occurs when the upper quadrant tip of your saw strikes another object while cutting, is reinserted into a previous cut improperly, or the nose of the saw is pushed rather than pulled.
- Felled trees may fall on smaller trees that were not properly cut. These saplings may be under tremendous pressure. Cut them cautiously prior to cutting up the larger tree into smaller sections.
- While cutting, keep your body on the uphill side at all times to prevent the tree from rolling onto you.
- Finally, know the chainsaw's limitations, know your own limitations, and continuously be on the lookout for potential dangers.