

Egg Harbor Fire Department and First Responders Standard Operating Guideline

Subject: Power Saws

SOG 308

Purpose: The purpose of this guideline is to define safe and appropriate usage of power saws.

Scope: This procedure applies to all members of the Egg Harbor Fire Department.

Guideline

The adverse operational conditions during which power saws are used during emergencies creates a high potential for accidents. A slight miscalculation or sudden unplanned move can result in a serious accident. Performance, skill, common sense, and strict observation of safety measures can prevent accidents. It is the responsibility of all personnel to learn and understand these safety guidelines. It is the responsibility of all command and company officers to ensure that their subordinate personnel observe these guidelines whenever power saws are operated in training or at an emergency scene.

Operational Guidance

I. Personal protection

- A. Full protective clothing, including proper eye protection, shall be worn by those members operating, and in close proximity to, the operation of power saws.
- B. To prevent accidents that may be caused by moving belts, gears, chains, or blades, it is imperative that the saw operator and the guide both have their protective clothing completely buttoned up.

II. Operational considerations

- A. Always carry the chain saw with the engine stopped, the guide bar and saw chain to the rear, and the muffler away from your body.
- B. Always keep both hands on the control handles when operating the saw. Use a firm grip with thumbs and fingers encircling the saw handles.
- C. Make sure that you have secure footing before operating the saw.
- D. A team of two firefighters shall always perform cutting operations. The firefighter operating the saw (operator) shall be assisted and/or guided by a second firefighter (guide).
- E. The saw shall always be shut off when unattended.
 - 1. The saw shall be shut off while it is hoisted.
- F. Have a plan of action before putting the saw into operation. The plan should include:
 - 1. Location and sequence of cuts and openings needed.

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2. Consideration of wind direction, products of combustion, reduced visibility, and force on the saw operator, or on any exposures.
3. Provision for at least two means of egress, if possible.

III. Tactical considerations

- A. Whenever possible, an officer should be present to supervise cutting operations and to maintain safety precautions by acting as a “guiding firefighter” for the firefighter operating the saw.
 1. The number of personnel (involved in cutting operations) should be limited to the minimal number required to sustain the operation.
 2. All other personnel shall be removed to a safe location until the operation is complete or assistance with the operation is needed.
- B. Before operating the saw, always place the safety guard in the correct position to provide proper protection for the person using the saw.
- C. The “guiding firefighter” should maintain hand contact with the back of the saw operator, and tap once to halt the operation if a problem should occur.
- D. Once a cut is made, the operator should stop the blade rotation on the material prior to lifting the unit.
- E. The “guiding firefighter” should monitor roof conditions and be aware of position on the roof so as not risk safety by working too close to roof edge.
- F. Power saw operations are safest when cutting on horizontal surfaces near ground level, or on vertical surfaces near waist level.
- G. Operating a power saw above chest height is extremely hazardous and should not be attempted as a normal course of action.
 1. This type of operation shall be conducted only under the direct order and/or under the supervision of an officer.
 2. The officer ordering this operation shall weigh heavily the value gained against the extreme hazard to personnel.
- H. The use of a power saw from a ladder is not recommended if there are other alternatives.
- I. Do not operate power saws in suspected flammable or explosive atmospheres.