

HEDGE TRIMMER SAFETY

Hedge trimmers are powerful, professional-grade tools designed to cut through bushes, hedges, shrubs, and other woody growth. When properly used they save time, reduce effort, and make a difficult task easy. **If handled carelessly or used improperly, these powerful tools can cause severe injury or death.**

Before using a hedge trimmer, you must:

- Read and understand the operator and safety manual for your tool
- Perform a **Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)** for the task.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment (Eye, hearing, and face protection)
- **Always wear sturdy work gloves and work boots to provide protection against cuts.**
- Make sure all others who use the hedge trimmer read and understand both manuals before operating the tool
- Clear the work area of bystanders, debris, and other work hazards
- Make sure you have safe, unobstructed footing
- Make sure there are no hidden hazards (electrical and gas lines, AC units, etc.)

Starting:

- Always start the hedge trimmer flat on the ground with blades clear of all obstructions
- Never “drop start” the unit or attempt to start the unit while it is resting on blade tips
- Always grip the unit firmly when starting to prevent loss of control when pulling starter handle
- Always hold the unit securely with both hands after it starts, using the front and rear handles
- Maintain a secure, two-handed grip at all times when unit is in use.
- **Never hold the unit with one hand for any reason**
- **Never reach for the blade handle when the blade is moving. Always know where your hand is in relation to the blade. Look!!! Don't guess.**

Hedge Trimmer Operation – Blades are extremely sharp. Moving blades have powerful cutting action. Contact with moving blades will cause serious injury. Keep hands, feet, and all other body parts away from blades at all times.

The hedge trimmer blades must **NOT** move at idle, otherwise serious personal injury may result. Periodic carburetor adjustment may be necessary to assure blades do not move at idle. If blades move during idle **shut unit off immediately and remove from service until proper adjustments are made.**

Cutting:

Obey these important precautions when cutting:

- **Always use two hands to operate your hedge trimmer.** Do not operate the unit one handed. Do not hold the unit with one hand while doing another task with the other hand – turn the power off and place the unit on the ground. If the hedge trimmer slips out of your hands, **DO NOT** attempt to catch the unit – let it fall to the ground. Reduce the possibility of slipping by using a firm grip with thumbs and fingers encircling each handle.
- **Never attempt to grab the blade handle without looking directly at the unit to ensure the blade is not engaged and your hand contacts the handle – not the blade!!!**
- Always cut using a stable stance with both feet on the ground. Be alert for hazards such as slippery surfaces, stairs, rocks, edging, or other items that may affect your footing.
- **Do not operate on raised surfaces** where slips and falls may occur. Never stand on a ladder or other temporary platform. Use a shaft mounted hedge trimmer to reach tall bushes and shrubs.
- **Never hold or allow others to hold material you are cutting.**
- Always keep both hands on the unit to control cutting action.
- Always keep muffler exhaust directed away from your body.
- Always keep fingers, hands, and all other body parts away from cutting blades and cutting area.
- **Never allow anyone to reach into the cutting area for any reason while the unit is running.**
- **Always maintain a direct line of sight to the hedge trimmer blades and the area where cutting is being performed. Be aware of what lies in the path of the blades at all times.**
- **Always maintain a minimum safety zone of 15 feet from where you are working. Don't allow others to enter the safety zone unless you have shut off the hedge trimmer.**
- **Never allow another person or operator to work on the opposite side of a hedge or bush you are cutting.**
- **Never feed blades toward your body** when cutting – keep blades directed away from you at all times.
- **Never exceed the capacity of the hedge trimmer** – forcing blades to cut materials thicker than the trimmer is designed to handle will result in jams, blade damage, and poor overall performance.
- **Never reach for, or try to remove, jammed material while the engine is running.**