



# ALABAMA MUNICIPAL INSURANCE CORPORATION MUNICIPAL WORKERS COMPENSATION FUND, INC.



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## *Loss Control Division*

### LAWN MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL

#### General Rules

1. When working outdoors during the day, wear sun block, a long sleeve shirt, a hat and long pants.
2. Stop lawn maintenance operations during an electrical storm and when lightning is visible or thunder is heard.
3. Use work gloves when handling tree stumps and branches.
4. Remove your gloves and wash your hands with soap and water after handling tree stumps and branches.

#### Lifting Procedures

1. Plan the move before lifting; remove obstructions from your chosen pathway.
2. Test the weight of the load before lifting by pushing the load along its resting surface.
3. If the load is too heavy or bulky, use a wheelbarrow or get assistance from a co-worker.
4. If assistance is required to perform a lift, coordinate and communicate your movements with those of your co-worker.
5. Position your feet 6 to 12 inches apart with one foot slightly in front of the other.
6. Face the load.
7. Bend at the knees, not at the back.
8. Keep your back straight.
9. Get a firm grip on the object with your hands and fingers. Use handles when present.
10. Never lift anything if your hands are greasy or wet.
11. Wear protective gloves when lifting branches or clippings with thorns or jagged edges.
12. Hold objects as close to your body as possible.
13. Perform lifting movements smoothly and gradually; do not jerk the load:
14. If you must change direction while lifting or carrying the load, pivot your feet and turn your entire body. Do not twist at the waist.
15. Set down objects in the same manner as you picked them up, except in reverse.
16. Slide materials to the end of the tailgate before attempting to lift them off of a pick-up truck. Do not lift over the walls or tailgate of the truck bed.

#### Ladders and Step Ladders

1. Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions label affixed to the ladder if you are unsure how to use the ladder.
2. Do not use ladders that have loose rungs, cracked or split side rails, missing rubber foot pads, or other visible damage.

3. Remove buildup of material such as dirt or mud.
4. Allow only one person on the ladder at a time.
5. Face the ladder when climbing up or down.
6. Maintain a three-point contact by keeping both hands and one foot or both feet and one hand on the ladder at all times when climbing up or down.
7. When performing work from a ladder, face the ladder and do not lean backward or sideways from the ladder.
8. Do not stand on the top two rungs of any ladder.
9. Do not stand on a ladder that wobbles, or that leans to the left or right.
10. Secure the ladder in place by having another employee hold it.
11. Do not carry items in your hands while climbing up or down a ladder.
12. Do not try to "walk" a ladder by rocking it. Climb down the ladder, and then move it.

#### Gasoline Powered Lawn Maintenance Tools

1. Wear safety glasses, a dust mask and closed toe shoes when operating any mower, edger, chain saw, line trimmer, or any other gasoline powered lawn maintenance tool.
2. Do not use a chain saw, lawn mower, or any other gasoline powered lawn tool if you are taking medication from a container labeled "May cause drowsiness".
3. Read and follow the manufacturer's routine and preventive maintenance schedule posted on the workshop wall.
4. Do not use tools with parts that are loose, worn, cracked or otherwise visibly damaged.
5. Tag damaged tools "Out of Service" to prevent accidental start up or use.
6. Do not alter or by-pass any safety device provided by the manufacturer.
7. Use only the grip locations, as specified by the manufacturer, as handholds when operating the unit.
8. Do not pour fuel into the tank of a running engine.
9. Do not smoke while servicing, using or refueling a gasoline powered tool.
10. Keep body parts and clothing away from the running engine and the cutting blade.
11. Do not run a gasoline engine inside the storage shed.
12. Turn off the engine when you are not cutting or trimming.
13. Allow the engine to cool before performing maintenance or refueling.
14. Stop the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before cleaning, inspecting, adjusting or repairing cutting blades or other rotating parts.
15. Allow the engine to cool before covering or storing it in the storage shed.

#### Mowing:

1. Before entering fenced back yards, check for dogs by shaking the gate. If a dog is present, ask the owner to restrain the dog until you finish your job; check again before entering.
2. Visually inspect the area to be mowed. Remove or mow around hazards such as tree stumps, roots, rocks, branches, sprinklers, hoses, electrical cords, light fixtures, pipes, clothes lines and toys.
3. Never by-pass the kill switch on the mower handle.
4. Only the operator is permitted to ride on a riding mower.
5. Put the mower into neutral before starting or shutting off a riding power mower.

6. Do not place hands or feet under the mower deck.
7. Do not direct the grass discharge towards bystanders.
8. Empty the grass catcher to avoid clogging the mower.
9. Turn off the mower before dumping the grass catcher or removing clogged grass from the chute.
10. When using a riding mower, mow up and down the slope. Do not mow across a slope.
11. To mow across a slope, use an upright mower.
12. Keep the mower in gear when going down slopes.

### Edging

1. Do not start an edger with the blade touching the ground.
2. Do not allow anyone to stand in front of or on the unguarded side of the blade while the edger is in operation.
3. Operate the edger at full blade speed.
4. When edging along roads, driveways or parking lots, stay as close to the curb as possible.

### Line Trimming/Weed Eaters/Brushcutters

- Before refueling, remove the trimmer from your harness, place the trimmer on the ground and allow the engine to cool

### Backpack Blowers

1. Do not use the blower to clean yourself.
2. Do not direct the blower toward bystanders.

### Chain Saws

1. When transporting a chain saw by hand, stop the engine, grip the saw handle, place the muffler at the side away from your body and position the guide bar to the rear.
2. Do not remove the chain brake or alter handles, chain brake, chain or covers.
3. Always start a chain saw with a 10 inch or larger bar on the ground. Engage the chain brake, place one foot through the bottom handle, hold the top handle and pull the starter rope.
4. Do not place a chain saw on your knee when starting it.
5. Always use both hands to maintain control of the chain saw.
6. When moving from tree to tree or cut to cut, activate the chain brake, remove your finger from the trigger and keep the bar away from your body.
7. Do not operate a chain saw above your shoulder height.
8. To prevent kickback, keep the nose of the bar clear of other nearby objects during cutting.
9. Do not set a saw down while the blade is engaged.
10. Stop the engine and turn the switch to "OFF" when the chain saw is to be left unattended.

### Hedge and Tree Trimming

1. Wear long sleeves, long pants and gardening gloves when trimming hedges or when picking up cuttings from thorny shrubs.
2. If you discover a bee hive or wasp nest while hedging or trimming, use the long distance aerosol insecticide labeled "Wasp and Bee Insecticide" to spray the nest. Test with the stick or pole to ensure that all bees or wasps are gone before continuing work.
3. Seek first aid immediately if bitten or stung by wasps or bees.
4. Do not handle caterpillars or other insects with your bare hands.

5. Do not wear dangling jewelry while using hedge clippers.
6. Position yourself so that your hedge and tree cutting movements are performed below your shoulder level.
7. Do not break branches, sticks or twigs over your legs or knees or under your feet. Use clippers, shears or a saw to cut them.
8. Do not perform trimming of a limb if the limb is within 10 ft. of power lines.
9. Do not leave saws, clippers, shovels, rakes, and other equipment lying around in the work area.

#### Hand Saws

1. Keep control of saws by releasing downward pressure at the end of the stroke.
2. Do not use a saw that has dull saw blades.
3. Oil saw blades after each use.
4. Keep hands and fingers away from the saw blade while using the saw.
5. Do not carry a saw by the blade.
6. Return saws, clippers, and other cutting tools to their sheaths or guarded storage place after use.

#### Vehicle/Trailer Safety

1. Set the parking brake in the towing vehicle and use wheel blocks to chock the wheels of the trailer before removing any equipment from the trailer.
2. Secure equipment and fuel tanks to the vehicle with chains or straps to eliminate or minimize shifting of the load.
3. No one is permitted to ride in the trailer.
4. Use ramps to load and unload mowers and edgers from the trailer.
5. Take slow, wide turns when towing trailers.
6. Do not exceed the load capacity as posted on the door of the trailer.
7. Do not place all the heavy equipment on one side of the trailer.

#### Lawn Mower Blade Removal and Sharpening

1. Turn off the mower and remove the spark plug wire before removing the blade.
2. Use an extension ratchet, or an offset wrench, to remove cutting blades. If the equipment is fitted with a blade lockdown device, engage the lockdown before beginning the blade removal/installation process. If no lockdown device is available, keep the blade from turning or slipping by holding it with a gloved hand.
3. Do not use grinding wheels that have chips, cracks or grooves.
4. Do not use the grinding wheel if it wobbles. Tag it "Out of Service".
5. Adjust the tongue guard so that it is no more than 1/4 inch from the grinding wheel.
6. Do not try to stop the grinding wheel with your hand, even if you are wearing gloves.
7. Allow blade to cool for 5 minutes after sharpening before reinstalling it on the mower.

## PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER SPRAYING OPERATORS

#### Pesticide and Fertilizer Spraying

1. Do not handle or spray pesticides if you have open cuts or scratches on exposed skin surfaces on your arms or hands.

2. Visually inspect the area to be sprayed for trip hazards, low branches, and clothes lines before beginning the job. Avoid these hazards as you spray.
3. Keep containers labeled "Pesticides" tightly closed when you have finished using them.
4. Do not transfer pesticides or fertilizers into an unmarked or unlabeled container.
5. Do not transport a pesticide container in the cab of a service vehicle.
6. Always spray downwind; do not stand downwind when others are spraying.
7. Do not smoke or carry smoking materials while handling or spraying from containers labeled "Pesticide" or "Fertilizer".
8. Wash pesticide contaminated clothes separately from other clothing.
9. Carry fresh water and soap in the service vehicle when you are going to a pesticide or fertilizer spraying job.
10. Remove work clothes immediately whenever clothing becomes soaked or wet with liquids from containers labeled "pesticide".
11. Walk through areas to be sprayed before spraying, and remove or "flag" low branches and clothes lines before spraying. Stand clear of these trip hazards as you spray.
12. Do not use empty or washed containers labeled "Pesticide" as eating or drinking containers.
13. At the end of the workday, spray operators must remove their work clothes and take a shower in the employee locker room before going home.
14. Refill the containers labeled "Handwash", "Soap Cleanser" and "Drinking Water" that are on the service vehicles before going to a pesticide or fertilizer spraying job. Do not drink from the "Handwash" container; do not wash hands from the "Drinking Water" container.

NOTE: This document is not intended to be legal advice. It does not identify all the issues surrounding the particular topic. Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert or an attorney who is knowledgeable about the topic. Reliance on this information is at the sole risk of the user.<sup>1</sup>