Stump Grinders – Landscaping Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Tree stumps are cut up by the use of grinders, a powerful machine. With that power, employers must design procedures and protocols that align with the power of a grinder.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Grinders are designed to cut up tree stumps, but can easily cause severe lacerations to feet, legs, hands, or arms. Grinders can send debris flying, injuring the operator or bystanders.

Common hazards include the following:

- Cuts from blades or teeth
- Catching fingers, clothing, or jewellery in pinch points or wrap points
- Burns from hot points
- Cuts, abrasions, and bruises to eyes, face, or exposed skin from flying debris
- Fire and spills when refuelling
- Sprains and strains from holding grinders in awkward positions for long periods of time

Incident example

- A worker suffered a severe laceration to her arm when she was struck by a large wood chip thrown up by the stump grinder operated by her co-worker nearby.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Initial Grinder Safety Checklist

- Make sure you are familiar with the grinder and its safe use before you start.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including steel-toe footwear, protective gloves, a hard hat, a face shield, and hearing protection.
- Wear full-length, close-fitting clothing.
- Remove rings, bracelets, and other jewellery.
- Check that the grinder is in good operating order – Make sure the grinder teeth lock bolts are tight, the motor running is smoothly, and that safety guards are in place.
- Check if there is a clearly marked and working shut-off device that the operator can reach while working.
- Check the worksite. Remove debris, such as rocks or pieces of concrete.
- Make sure there are no underground services where you will be grinding.
- Barricade the work area to keep bystanders away.

On the Job

- Select a work surface that is as firm and level as possible. Stabilize the machine.
- When working by a road, position the cutting head to direct wood chips away from passing traffic.
- Be alert for co-workers or bystanders entering the work area. Stop working if someone wanders into the work area.
- Shut down and lock out equipment before removing clogged materials or making adjustments.
- Brace your legs and avoid twisting your body when maneuvering the grinder.
- When leaving the machine unattended, always remove the key.

Refuelling

- Refuel outdoors on the ground.
- Turn off the engine and allow it to cool before refuelling.
- Extinguish all ignition sources (for example, cigarettes).
- Use only an approved gasoline container in good condition.
- Keep the nozzle in contact with the fuel tank.
- If you spill fuel on your clothing, change immediately.

- Never overfill the tank.
- Replace the cap and tighten it securely.

Responsibilities of Employers

- Maintain and repair stump grinders.
- Train workers on the safe use of stump grinders before they start work.
- Demonstrate how to hold, use, and store the grinder.
- Demonstrate how the safety features work (for example, guards, shields, and automatic releases), and instruct workers not to remove any of these features.
- Demonstrate how to lock out the equipment before clearing any jams or performing repairs or maintenance.
- Remind workers about the PPE they are required to wear.
- Provide adequate supervision after training.

FINAL WORD

Having a through and exhaustive start-up checklist in grinder operations will secure a safe outcome in grinder operations for workers.