

Hazard Review

- **Bloodborne pathogens (HIV, Hepatitis B, etc.)**
- **Cuts, scrapes, punctures, abrasions**
- **Damage to eyes**
- **Hearing loss**
- **Non-bloodborne pathogens (Hepatitis A, parasites, etc.)**
- **Skin irritation, dermatitis**
- **Slips, trips and falls**
- **Struck by vehicles or objects**

Related Safe Practices

- **Chainsaws, Operation**
- **Hand tools**
- **Infectious Materials**
- **Lifting and Body Mechanics**
- **Power Tools**
- **Traffic Safety**
- **Walking and Working Surfaces**

Required Personal Protective Equipment

- **Head protection**
- **Hearing protection**
- **Heavy duty anti-vibration gloves (for power or vibrating machinery)**
- **High visibility vest**
- **Leather gloves**
- **Safety glasses¹**
- **Steel-toed shoes**

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Although brush removal varies from site to site there are many common hazards and safe practices available to prevent injury. This safe work practices addresses the removal of smaller trees, tree limbs, fallen branches and grasses.

¹ RPD Industrial Investigation, EHS Case #3328, DOI 1/23/2007

BEFORE

1. Complete training. Do not perform any brush removal tasks unless trained on all the related Safe Work Practices.
2. Plan the job. Make sure all co-workers know what the plan is, what each of the coworkers is doing and where they will be. Communicate all changes.²
3. Inspect the area in which you will be working prior to removing brush or using a chainsaw by looking for objects that may cause injuries (such as rocks, roots or needles).
4. Separate work into zones to isolate tasks and prevent injury from another task (the zones may change depending on specific operations and locations). Divide the zones by natural landscape boundaries such as tree lines, bushes and sidewalks. Where natural boundaries are not present, separate zones with high visibility cones or warning tape (can be bought in various colors).
 - a. Hot zone - cutting of brush or moving brush without visibility
 - b. Warm zone - organizing of bush or moving of brush
 - c. Cold zone - loading of brush onto or off trucks with plenty of visibility
5. Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment for the zone and task (additional or fewer items may be required depending on task and location):
 - a. Hot zone – steel toe boots, high visibility vest, leather or puncture resistant gloves, hard hat, safety glasses or goggles, face shield (as necessary) and hearing protection
 - b. Warm zone - steel toe boots, high visibility vest, leather or puncture resistant gloves, hard hat, safety glasses
 - c. Cold zone - steel toe boots, high visibility vest, leather or puncture resistant gloves and safety glasses

DURING

1. Use the appropriate tool for the task.
2. Keep loads of brush being removed to manageable weights (always less than 50 pounds) and sizes. Verify that brush is not caught on other brush or stationary objects that may prevent removal. Do not put more than 50 pounds of force pulling on brush, if it remains “stuck” look at other ways to free it.³
3. Verify that no one is in the way of where you will be throwing brush if you are piling it in a central location or into the back of a truck.

² RPD Industrial Investigation, EHS Case #3281, DOI 11/18/2006

³ RPD Industrial Investigation, EHS Case #3389, DOI 3/17/2007

4. Break up repetitive tasks with other tasks (e.g. after cutting brush for 15 minutes, load the brush onto a truck).

AFTER

1. Allow used muscles to rest.
2. Clean and service tools as necessary.
3. Remove defective tools from service.
4. Store tools properly so that others cannot be hurt by them.

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