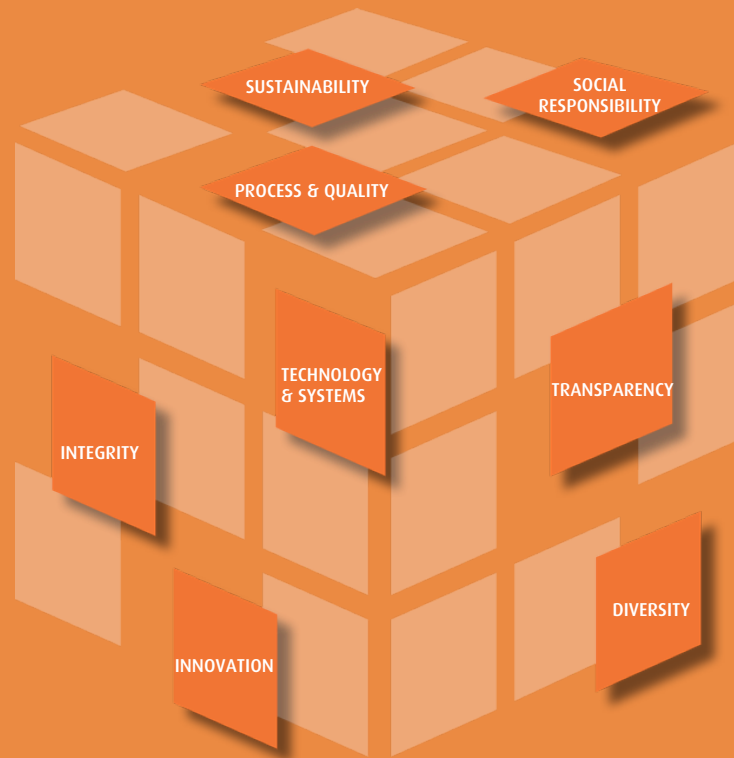


Snow Blower Safety



Snow Blower Safety

During the winter months snow blowers can be very useful, but they can also be dangerous. There have been multiple injuries associated with snow blowers, most often involving the hand or fingers, including amputations.

Here are some tips to keep you safe when using a snow blower:

- ▶ Follow all manufacturers' instructions.
- ▶ Always turn off the engine on a gas machine or unplug the motor on an electric model before clearing a clog at the auger or discharge chute.
- ▶ Use the clearing tool, never your hands or feet, to remove the clog.
- ▶ Most injuries typically occur when the user tries to clear a clogged auger or discharge chute with their hands.



Protect yourself from carbon-monoxide poisoning by starting and running gasoline-powered snow blowers outside, rather than in your garage, shed or warehouse.

- ▶ Don't wear loose pants, jackets, scarves or other clothing which can get tangled in a snow blower's moving parts.
- ▶ Wear hearing protection, especially when operating gas-powered models.
- ▶ Wait until a gas model's engine is cool before refueling. Never refuel while a snow blower is running.
- ▶ For electric models, use an outdoor extension cord and an outlet with ground-fault circuit interrupter protection. Then be sure to keep the cord safely away from the spinning auger while working.

When purchasing a snow blower look for these built-in safety features:

- ▶ Many snow blower models include a clearing tool for clogs. The tool is stored within easy reach on the machine, making it convenient for safe clearing.
- ▶ Manufacturers have addressed injury prevention to the hands with a handlebar dead-man control that stops the snow blower when released.

Other precautions to consider during snow removal activities:

Drink water: Dehydration is an important issue in the winter as well as the summer. Drink a couple glasses of water about thirty minutes before you begin. Stay hydrated throughout all work periods.

Warm up: Stretch the muscles in your back, legs, shoulders and arms prior to starting. Warm muscles work more efficiently and are less prone to injury.

Dress in layers: Putting on a heavy coat is often done prior to starting this task. This is potentially dangerous because you may quickly overheat. Wear a shirt under a sweater, under a light jacket and strip off layers as you warm up.



Snow blowers can save a great deal of time when used properly and safely.

Other precautions to consider during snow removal activities:
(continued)

Cover your face and hands in extreme cold: Frostbite can occur easily in subzero temperatures, particularly to the extremities. Ensure that your fingertips are fully covered with gloves, wear layered socks under your boots and cover your nose and ears. Use sunscreen due to increased reflective exposure from the snow.

Take frequent breaks: Take a break every five or ten minutes while you're working. Never let your heart rate exceed 85 percent of its maximum. To estimate your maximum heart rate, subtract your age from 220. Pace yourself.

Slip protection: Carry and use anti-slip and supportive shoes or attachments that fit the base of your shoes to prevent slips.

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