

# Prevention Connection



Safety resources to protect your world

## Backpack Blower Safety

Backpack blowers are an essential tool for the professional groundskeeper. They allow for rapid clean up of lawn, leaf, and lot debris far quicker than traditional rakes and brooms.

Like any power tool, there is the potential for harm to the user, bystanders, or property when used incorrectly. When that happens, the very tool that was invented to save you enormous amounts of time spent on a job ends up costing you even more for medical treatment, angry property owners who want restitution, and completion of accident reports and investigations. Here are common safety guidelines to follow when using a backpack blower:

- Require every employee to review the safe operation portion of the manufacturer's manual.
- Always fuel on the ground. Never fuel while smoking, and never fuel a unit inside a vehicle or on a truck bed. NEVER fuel a unit while on the back of another employee.
- Make sure any fueling overspill is wiped dry before strapping on your back.
- Adjust the shoulder straps to reduce back strain.
- Survey the area you are cleaning before operating the backpack blower. Look for hazards like broken glass and small stones that may fly like missiles.
- Be aware of wind direction and dust. Do not send a dust cloud into moving traffic.
- Always wear safety glasses. Backpacks create high velocity wind streams that can send sand particles and other debris back into the operator's eyes.
- Use gloves to protect the hands. Wear appropriate shoes; never wear sandals. Gloves and proper footwear provide additional protection from noxious weeds, like poison ivy, that may have been trimmed into the lawn debris on some lots.
- Most backpack units exceed the 85db per unit. An employee is required to have proper hearing protection, such as muffs or plugs, to help reduce the potential for hearing loss.
- Never operate from a moving vehicle.
- Be aware of bystanders, especially children. Do not allow them to play in or near the airstream.
- Do not aim or tease pets, such as dogs and cats, with the airstream. You could easily injure their eyes with debris.
- Be aware that extended use can make the casing and muffler quite hot. Do not touch with bare hands.

*This bulletin is designed by SECURA Insurance to inform you of important safety measures that can prevent injuries and save you considerable business expense.*

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