



**TOWNSVILLE
ROCKWHEELERS
MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB**

SAFE OPERATION OF A BRUSH CUTTER

A brush cutter is a high speed, fast cutting power tool and safety precautions must be observed to reduce the risk of personal injury. These are not 'back yard' machines. They are powerful professional tools and should be treated with respect. If the rotating cutting head comes in contact with rocks or sticks, it may fling them at the operator or bystanders and can cause serious injuries. It is important that all the provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) be worn when operating them.

If you have any questions or difficulties with the machine, ask the Track Supervisor.

Wearing long pants, long sleeve shirt and gloves will help reduce the impact of stones and sticks and you will not go home looking like you've spent hours at the acupuncturist. You also have the added bonus of being protected from the sun.

Before starting you will receive a PPE bag that will contain 2 compression bandages, your eye, hearing and hand protection, spare cutting cord and a small canister of fuel. You may also wish to take with you sun screen, water and a small hand towel.

The track supervisor will demonstrate how to use the PPE and how to safely start operate, refuel and restring your machine. They will also provide you with some operating tips and advise you about any issues you may encounter with the tracks you will be working on.

DO NOT use a brush cutter unless you are familiar with its safe use and you have been appropriately trained.



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Personal Protection Equipment

The following PPE must be worn when operating a brush cutter.

- Long sleeved shirt, long pants
- Boots or other sturdy shoes.
- Gloves, leather or gardening
- Hearing protection - muffs or plugs
- Eye protection – goggles or helmet with face shield/ear muffs
- Hat and sun cream SPF 30+



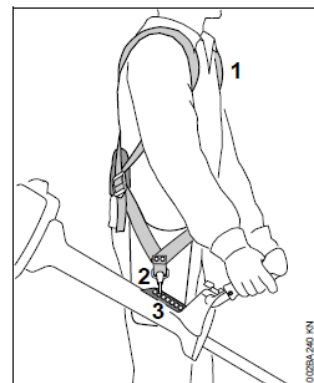
Pre-Operation Checks:

- Check the PPE bag contains 2 compression bandages, eye, hearing and hand protection, spare cutting cord and a small canister of fuel.
- Check the machine is not damaged, that all buttons and triggers operate freely.
- Check guards are in place and are in working order.
- Check harness for worn or broken straps or fasteners. Adjust for personal fit.
- Ensure the machine contains cutting cord and carry spare for replacement
- Make sure all PPE is being worn, especially eye wear and hearing protection before starting machine
- Fuel the machine away from any possible sources of ignition. Only use fuel mix provided. Check fuel cap is on tight and check for fuel leaks.

Machine adjustments

Fitting the harness

- Put on the harness (1)
- Adjust length until the spring hook (2)
is about a hands width below your right hip.

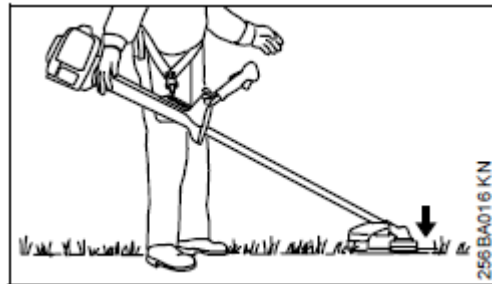




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Balancing the machine

- The head of the machine should just touch the ground.
- Attach the machine to the harness and let the machine go to see how it is balanced. Change the attachment point (3) of the spring hook as necessary.



Operating tips

- Be prepared to stop and adjust your harness and machine attachment points as required. The harness straps and machine attachment points are easy to adjust. It is only by using them that you will find the best position and placement for you. If uncertain, ask the track supervisor
- Being cut into a hill, the tracks have a low and a high side. When cutting the low side, you will find yourself leaning forward, reaching out and down. On the high side, leaning back and reaching up. You will find it easier to work and more comfortable if you set your machine as follows.
 - When cutting the low side, attach the machine at or toward the back of the attachment point. You will find this lowers the cutting head and allows you to more comfortably reach down the slope.
 - When working the high side of the track, attach the machine at or near the front. This raises the cutting head making it easier to cut the uphill slope.
- Try to cut on your left hand side. The cutting head is being pulled into the grass and is easier to control. Swing the cutting head in short arcs. Do not try to cut too much grass. Cut in the 8 - 12 o'clock area. Use plenty of power.
- You will generally find it easier and safer working up a slope. You will not have to reach out as far as the ground slopes up to you. Should you slip, you have less distance to fall.
- Take regular breaks. Have a drink, sit down - admire the scenery.
- Do not operate the machine closer than 10 metres to other track users.
- Stop the machine when replacing the cutting cord. Replace the cord on an open section of track, not over grass. It is possible that small parts on the cutting head may become dislodged. They will be easier to find on open ground.
- Keep hands, feet and loose clothing away from all moving parts.
- Do not overreach and ensure proper footing and balance when cutting.



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- Never leave the brush cutter running unattended.
- Make sure motor is stopped and allowed to cool before refuelling. This is a good time to take a drink and have a break. Do not smoke when refuelling the machine. Check the fuel lid is securely in place and check for leaks by tilting the machine.

Post Operation

- Check the machine and equipment. Advise the Track Supervisor if there are any defects, damage or if the machine is hard to start/stop. It is important that the machines are serviceable for the next person to use.
- Advise the Track Supervisor about any accidents or incidents that may occur. Your activities are covered by MTBA Insurance but the details must be recorded by the Club.

Safe Work Check list

General Safety

- Using a brush cutter can be strenuous work. Take regular breaks, drink plenty of water.
- The tracks are very uneven, narrow and rocky. Wear sturdy footwear, preferably boots, to protect ankles and help reduce slips and trips. Thick socks help reduce blisters.
- Always wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – goggles, ear plugs/mufflers and gloves, long sleeve shirt, long pants, sturdy footwear, hat and sun screen SPF 30+.
- Be alert to your surroundings. Do not operate the machine within 10 meters of any other track users.
- Always stop the machine when refueling or replacing cutting cord.
- Report any accidents or machinery defects or damage to the Track Supervisor.

Emergency Contacts numbers

Ambulance, Fire, Police - 000

Trail Supervisor -



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Safe Operation of a Brush Cutter

Written Assessment

Q1. What PPE is required to operate the brush cutter?

- a) None
- b) Long sleeved shirt; long pants; boots or other sturdy shoes; gloves; hearing and eye protection; hat and sun cream SPF 30+
- c) Thongs, stubbies and a Jackie Howe singlet.

Q2. Which of the following **is not** a pre operation activity?

- a) Check the machine is not damaged, that all buttons and triggers operate freely.
- b) Check guards are in place and are in working order.
- c) Check harness for worn or broken straps or fasteners. Adjust for personal fit.
- d) Check your socks are matching colours.
- e) Ensure the machine contains cutting cord and carry spare for replacement
- f) Make sure all PPE is being worn, especially eye wear and hearing protection before starting the machine.
- g) Fuel the machine away from any possible sources of ignition. Only use fuel mix provided. Check fuel cap is on tight and check for fuel leaks.

Q3. Why is working up a slope generally easier and safer?

- a) It's not.
- b) You will not have to reach out as far as the ground slopes up to you. Should you slip, you have less distance to fall.
- c) Gravity gets less the higher you go.

Q4. Do not operate the machine closer than...

- a) 1 meter to other track users
- b) 10 metres to other track users.
- c) 5 meters to other track users

Result: Pass/Did not pass

Assessors Name (print)

Sign

Date

Trainees Name (print).....

Sign

Date