

TOOLBOX TALK

BRIEFKIT

Wood Chipper Safety

A ready-to-deliver toolbox talk for foremen and supervisors. 8-10 minute spoken script plus briefing register for operative sign-in.

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| REFERENCE | TBT-WOOD-CHIPPER-SAFETY-001 | DURATION | 8-10 minutes |
| DATE | | SITE | |
| TRAINER (PRINT) | | SIGNATURE | |

1 Why it matters

A chipper falls under PUWER like any dangerous machine, and the HSE guidance for it (AIS38, Powered mobile wood chippers) is built around one thing: protecting the operator at the infeed. Almost every chipper fatality is a draw-in at the infeed, often someone reaching to push one more small piece of brash through by hand. The controls in this talk, the side-feed, the no-hand-feeding rule, two people, and the engine-off blockage drill, are the ones that keep people alive, so we don't water them down.

2 PPE required for this task

Helmet with face and eye protection (EN 1731 + EN 166)

Sturdy safety boots

Hearing protection (EN 352)

Close-fitting cut-resistant gloves, NOT loose gauntlets

Hi-vis on public-facing and roadside work

3 What to say

Spoken script for the supervisor. Read or paraphrase, in order.

1 Never put your hand near the infeed. Ever.

I'm starting with the rule that keeps you alive: your hands do not go into the infeed chute, no matter how blocked it is, no matter how small the piece. The rollers don't care that you were quick. The people this machine kills were nearly all reaching in to clear or push something. There is always another way, a tool, a longer bit of brush, or stop the machine. Never your hand.

2 Test the stop bar before the first feed

Before anything goes in, we test the emergency stop or last-chance feed bar and we record it. That's the control that saves you if something does start drawing in, so we prove it works at the start of every shift. If it doesn't stop the feed, the chipper's out of service until it does, simple as that.

3 Feed from the side, butt-first

Stand to the side of the chute, never square in front of the infeed, so if anything snatches you're not in line to follow it in. Bigger material goes in butt-first and you let go and step back, let the machine take it at its own rate. Don't hang on to something that's being pulled in faster than you expected, let go.

4 The small stuff is what kills you

It sounds backwards but the little offcuts and handfuls of brush are the dangerous bit, because that's when a hand ends up right at the rollers. So small stuff goes in with a long push tool, or you bundle it inside bigger material and feed that. You never hand-feed little pieces down the chute. That single habit is the one that gets experienced people.

5 Two people, always

Never a lone operator on the chipper. One feeds, one stands as banksman and watches the feed with a hand ready for the stop bar. If you're on your own and the machine starts taking you, there's nobody to hit the stop. So if it's just you, the chipper doesn't run.

6 Nothing loose

Anything loose can be caught and drag you in with it, so before you feed: no open cuffs, no drawstrings, no scarf, no lanyard hanging off you, long hair tied back. Gloves are close-fitting, not big loose gauntlets that can be grabbed by the material and pull your hand in. Check yourself and check your mate before the first feed.

7 If it blocks

If it blocks, you don't fight it. Stop feeding, engine off, take the ignition key out and the isolator key if it's got one, and put them in your pocket. Then wait, and watch, until the rollers and disc have completely stopped, not slowing, stopped. Clear it from above with a tool, never reaching into the infeed. If it won't clear safely from above, the machine comes out of service and gets tagged.

8 Where you put it

Set the chipper up on firm level ground, chocked, with the discharge pointing away from people, the road and anything it could blast chippings at. Mind where the exhaust is and keep dry brush off it. A chipper sited badly turns its own discharge into a hazard for everyone stood near it.

4 Common mistakes to call out

- Reaching into the infeed to clear or push material (the killer)
- Hand-feeding small offcuts instead of using a push tool or bundling them
- Standing square in front of the infeed rather than to the side
- Not testing the last-chance / stop bar before the first feed
- Running the chipper with only one person on site
- Loose cuffs, drawstrings, scarves or lanyards while feeding
- Wearing loose gauntlet gloves near the infeed
- Clearing a blockage without engine off and keys out
- Reaching in before the rollers and disc have fully stopped
- Discharge pointed toward people, traffic or property

5 Watch on site this week

What the supervisor should be actively spotting on walk-arounds.

- Anyone's hand or arm going toward the infeed chute
- Small brush being hand-fed instead of pushed with a tool
- Operators stood directly in line with the infeed
- Stop bar not tested or not recorded at start of shift
- Chipper being fed with only one person present
- Loose clothing, lanyards or gauntlet gloves on a feeder
- Blockages being cleared with the engine running
- Chipper on a slope or discharging toward people or the road

6 Confirm the team understood

Ask one or two of these at the end of the talk.

1. What is the single thing that kills people on a chipper, and the rule that prevents it? (Draw-in at the infeed; your hand never goes near the infeed chute.)
2. How do we feed small offcuts? (With a long push tool, or bundled inside bigger material, never by hand.)
3. Why do we always have two people on the chipper? (One feeds, one watches the feed with a hand on the stop bar; alone, there's nobody to stop it.)
4. Walk me through clearing a blockage. (Stop feed, engine off, keys out and pocketed, wait until rollers and disc fully stop, clear from above with a tool, never reach in.)

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Briefing register: Wood Chippers

All operatives who attend this toolbox talk must sign below. Their signature confirms they have heard and understood the briefing.

Briefing delivered by:

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Name (print): | | Date: | |
| Signature: | | Time: | |
| Site: | | | |

Attendees. I confirm I have heard and understood the briefing detailed above:

| # | Name (print) | Company / Role | Signature | Date | CSCS / Ticket No. |
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Keep this register in the site Safety File. Additional sheets may be appended if more than 12 operatives are briefed.

Generated by Briefkit on 19 June 2026 · Latest version at briefkit.co.uk/toolbox-talks/wood-chipper-safety

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