

# Wahnapiatae First Nation Trimmer/Brushcutter Policy

Adopted by **Band Council Motion: WFN BCM # 19/20-08-93**  
At Chief and Council Meeting of: **August 1, 2019**

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## 1.0 DEFINITIONS

- Equipment:** Defined for this policy statement only to mean the equipment owned by Wahnapiatae First Nation including but not limited power tools, PPE, and vehicles normally used by crews during routine operations.
- Operator:** Defined for this policy statement only to mean all department employees, or approved user, certified in the safe operation of the specified equipment.
- PPE:** Defined for this policy statement only to mean Personal Protective Equipment including, but not limited to, hard hats, ear muffs, gloves, safety glasses, hi-vis clothing, steel toe/metatarsal boots, etc.
- WFN:** Wahnapiatae First Nation
- Trimmer:** A unit that is equipped with a nylon line head or head with flexible plastic blades.
- Brushcutter:** A unit equipped with a rigid metal blade.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The objective of this policy is to reduce the risk of injury or fatality from use of trimmer/brusher for the use to clear saplings or small trees WFN employees, students, volunteers and contractors under direct WFN

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 3.1 Departments

- 3.1.1 Departments have the primary responsibility for purchasing work equipment, tools and personal protective equipment that meets current recognized standards.

### 3.2 Supervisors

3.2.1 Supervisors have the primary responsibility for ensuring safe use of chain saws, tree trimming and tree removal operations including:

- 3.2.1.1 Conducting hazard assessments and developing site safety plans for particular operations.
- 3.2.1.2 Supplying the necessary safety equipment that is maintained and meets current standards.
- 3.2.1.3 Ensuring the employees are trained on the policy and procedures included in this section.
- 3.2.1.4 Assuring that safe work practices are utilized and prohibit the use of poor or forbidden practices.

### 3.3 Employees

3.3.1 Employees have the primary responsibility for following supervisory direction, abiding by the prescribed work practices and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment described in this section and inspecting tool before and after use.

## 4.0 PROCEDURES

### 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The use of this machine may be hazardous. If the rotating line or blade comes in contact with your body, it will cut you. When it comes in contact with solid foreign objects such as rocks or bits of metal, it may fling them directly or by ricochet in the direction of bystanders or the operator. Striking such objects could damage the cutting attachment and may cause blades to crack, chip or break. Thrown objects, including broken heads or blades, may result in serious or fatal injury to the operator or bystanders. Use your trimmer/brush cutter equipped with the appropriate cutting attachment only for cutting grass, brush, wood and similar material.
- 4.1.2 Do not use it for other purposes, since misuse may result in personal injury or property damage, including damage to the machine.
- 4.1.3 Minors should never be allowed to use this power tool. Bystanders, especially children, and animals should not be allowed in the area where it is in use.
- 4.1.4 Safe use of a trimmer / brushcutter involves
  - 1) the operator

- 2) The power tool
- 3) The use of the power tool.

## 4.2 The Operator

### 4.2.1 Physical Condition

4.2.1.1 You must be in good physical condition and mental health and not under the influence of any substance (drugs, alcohol, etc.) which might impair vision, dexterity or judgment. Do not operate this machine when you are fatigued.

4.2.1.2 Be alert – if you get tired, take a break. Tiredness may result in loss of control. Working with any power tool can be strenuous. If you have any condition that might be aggravated by strenuous work, check with your doctor before operating this machine.

4.2.1.3 Prolonged use of a power tool (or other machines) exposing the operator to vibrations may produce whitefinger disease (Raynaud's phenomenon) or carpal tunnel syndrome.

4.2.1.4 These conditions reduce the hand's ability to feel and regulate temperature, produce numbness and burning sensations and may cause nerve and circulation damage and tissue necrosis.

4.2.1.5 All factors which contribute to whitefinger disease are not known, but cold weather, smoking and diseases or physical conditions that affect blood vessels and blood transport, as well as high vibration levels and long periods of exposure to vibration are mentioned as factors in the development of whitefinger disease. In order to reduce the risk of whitefinger disease and carpal tunnel syndrome, please note the following:

- Some power tools are available with an anti-vibration (AV) system designed to reduce the transmission of vibrations created by the machine to the operator's hands. An AV system is recommended for those persons using power tools on a regular or sustained basis.
- Wear gloves and keep your hands warm.
- Keep the AV system well maintained. A power tool with loose components or with damaged or worn AV elements will tend to have higher vibration levels.

- Maintain a firm grip at all times, but do not squeeze the handles with constant, excessive pressure. Take frequent breaks.

4.2.1.6 All the above-mentioned precautions do not guarantee that you will not sustain whitefinger disease or carpal tunnel syndrome. Therefore, continual and regular users should closely monitor the condition of their hands and fingers. If any of the above symptoms appear, seek medical advice immediately.

#### 4.2.2 Proper Clothing

4.2.2.1 To reduce the risk of injury, the operator should wear proper protective apparel.

4.2.2.2 The deflector provided with your power tool will not protect the operator from all foreign objects (gravel, glass, wire, etc.) thrown back by the rotating cutting attachment. Thrown objects may also ricochet and strike the operator.

4.2.2.3 To reduce the risk of injury to your eyes never operate your power tool unless wearing goggles or properly fitted protective glasses with adequate top and side protection complying with ANSI Z87 "+" (or the applicable national standard). To reduce the risk of injury to your face it is recommended that you also wear a face shield or face screen over your goggles or protective glasses.

4.2.2.4 Wear an approved safety hard hat to reduce the risk of injury to your head when there is a danger of head injuries.

4.2.2.5 Power tool noise may damage your hearing. Wear sound barriers (ear plugs or ear mufflers) to protect your hearing.

4.2.2.6 Continual and regular users should have their hearing checked regularly.

4.2.2.7 Always wear heavy duty work gloves (e.g. made of leather or other wear resistant material) when handling the machine and metal blades. Heavy duty, nonslip gloves improve your grip and help to protect your hands.

4.2.2.8 Clothing must be sturdy and snug-fitting but allow complete freedom of movement. Wear long pants made of heavy material to help protect your legs. Do not wear shorts, sandals or go barefoot.

4.2.2.9 Avoid loose-fitting jackets, scarfs, neckties, jewelry, flared or cuffed pants, unconfined long hair or anything that could become caught on branches, brush or the moving parts of

the unit Secure hair so it is above shoulder level.

#### 4.3 The Power Tool

- 4.3.1 Never modify this power tool in any way. Only attachments supplied by the specific supplier should be used.
- 4.3.2 If this tool is subjected to unusually high loads for which it was not designed (e.g. heavy impact or a fall), always check that it is in good condition before continuing work. Check in particular that the fuel system is tight (no leaks) and that the controls and safety devices are working properly. Do not continue operating this machine if it is damaged.

#### 4.4 The Use of the Power Tool

##### 4.4.1 Transporting the Power Tool

- 4.4.1.1 To reduce the risk of injury from loss of control and blade or line contact, never carry or transport your power tool with the cutting attachment moving.
- 4.4.1.2 It may be carried only in a horizontal position. Grip the shaft in a manner that the machine is balanced horizontally. Keep the hot muffler away from your body and the cutting attachment behind you.
- 4.4.1.3 Always shut off the engine and make sure the cutting attachment has stopped before putting a trimmer / brushcutter down. When transporting it in a vehicle, properly secure it to prevent turnover, fuel spillage and damage to the unit. It is recommended that you keep metal blades covered with the transport guard (optional accessory).

#### 4.5 Before Starting

- 4.5.1 Always check your power tool for proper condition and operation before starting, particularly the throttle trigger, throttle trigger lockout, slide control/ stop switch, cutting attachment, deflector and harness. The throttle trigger must move freely and always spring back to the idle position. Never attempt to modify the controls or safety devices.
- 4.5.2 Check fuel system for leaks, especially the visible parts, e.g., filler cap, hose connections, manual fuel pump (only for power tools equipped with a manual fuel pump). Do not start the engine if there are leaks or damage – risk of fire! Have the machine repaired by a servicing dealer before using it
- 4.5.3 Never operate your power tool if it is damaged, improperly adjusted or maintained, or not completely or securely assembled.

- 4.5.4 Do not attach any cutting attachment to a unit without proper installation of all required parts. Failure to use the proper parts may cause the blade or head to fly off and seriously injure the operator or bystanders.
- 4.5.5 The cutting attachment must be properly tightened and in safe operating condition. Inspect for loose parts (nuts, screws, etc.) and for cracked or damaged heads or cracked, bent, warped or damaged blades. Replace damaged heads or blades before using the power tool. Always keep blades sharp.
- 4.5.6 Keep the handles clean and dry at all times; it is particularly important to keep them free of moisture, pitch, oil, fuel mix, grease or resin in order for you to maintain a firm grip and properly control your power tool.
- 4.5.7 Check that the spark plug boot is securely mounted on the spark plug – a loose boot may cause arcing that could ignite combustible fumes and cause a fire.
- 4.5.8 To reduce the risk of personal injury to the operator from blade or line contact and thrown objects, make sure your unit is equipped with the proper deflector, handle and harness for the type of cutting attachment being used.
- 4.5.9 Adjust carrying harness and hand grip to suit your size before starting work. The machine should be properly balanced as specified in your instruction manual for proper control and less fatigue in operation. To be better prepared in case of an emergency, practice releasing the unit from the harness as quickly as possible.

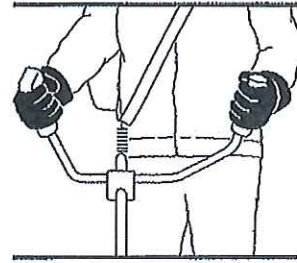
#### 4.6 During Operation

##### 4.6.1 Holding and Controlling the Power Tool

- 4.6.1.1 Always hold the unit firmly with both hands on the handles while you are working.
- 4.6.1.2 Wrap your fingers and thumbs around the handles, keeping the handles cradled between your thumb and forefinger. Keep your hands in this position to have your power tool under control at all times. Make sure your trimmer handles and grips are in good condition and free of moisture, pitch, oil, fuel mix or grease.
- 4.6.1.3 Make sure you always have good balance and secure footing.

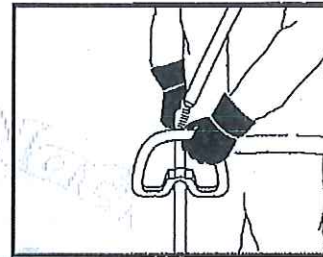
##### **Models with bike handle**

- Right hand on control handle, left hand on left handle.



#### Models with loop handle

- Left hand on loop handle, right hand on control handle, even if you are left-handed.



- 4.6.1.4 Never attempt to operate your power tool with one hand. Loss of control of the power tool resulting in serious or fatal injury may result. To reduce the risk of cut injuries, keep hands and feet away from the cutting attachment. Never touch a moving cutting attachment with your hand or any other part of your body.
- 4.6.1.5 Do not overreach. Keep proper footing and balance at all times. Special care must be taken in slippery conditions (wet ground, snow) and in difficult, overgrown terrain. Watch for hidden obstacles such as tree stumps, roots and ditches to avoid stumbling. For better footing, clear away scrub and cuttings. Be extremely cautious when working on slopes or uneven ground.
- 4.6.1.6 To reduce the risk of injury from loss of control, never work on a ladder or on any other insecure support. Never hold the cutting attachment above waist height.

#### 4.7 Working Conditions

- 4.7.1 Operate and start your power tool only outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Operate it under good visibility and daylight conditions only. Work carefully.

- 4.7.2 As soon as the engine is running, this product generates toxic exhaust fumes containing chemicals, such as unburned hydrocarbons (including benzene) and carbon monoxide that are known to cause respiratory problems, cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. Some of the gases (e.g. carbon monoxide) may be colorless and odorless. To reduce the risk of serious or fatal injury, illness from inhaling toxic fumes, never run the machine indoors or in poorly ventilated locations
- 4.7.3 If the vegetation being cut or the surrounding ground is coated with a chemical substance (such as an active pesticide or herbicide), read and follow the instructions and warnings that accompanied the substance at issue. Inhalation of certain dusts, especially organic dusts such as mold or pollen, can cause susceptible persons to have an allergic or asthmatic reaction. Substantial or repeated inhalation of dust and other airborne contaminants, in particular those with a smaller particle size, may cause respiratory or other illnesses. Control dust at the source where possible. Use good work practices, such as operating the unit so that the wind or operating process directs any dust raised by the power tool away from the operator. When the inhalation of dust cannot be substantially controlled, i.e., kept at or near the ambient (background) level, the operator and any bystanders should wear a respirator approved by NIOSH / MSHA for the type of dust encountered.

#### 4.8 Operating Instructions

- 4.8.1 Do not operate your power tool using the starting throttle lock, as you do not have control of the engine speed.
- 4.8.2 In the event of an emergency, shut off the engine immediately- move the slide control stop switch to 0 or **STOP**.
- 4.8.3 The cutting attachment continues to rotate for a short period after the throttle trigger is released (flywheel effect.)
- 4.8.4 The rotating cutting attachment may fling foreign objects directly or by ricochet a great distance.
- 4.8.5 To reduce the risk of eye and other injury always wear proper eye protection and ensure that bystanders are at least 50 feet (15 m) away. To reduce the risk of damage to property, also maintain this distance from such objects as vehicles or windows. Even maintaining a minimum distance of 15 meters cannot exclude the potential danger. Any coworkers who must be in the restricted area should also wear goggles or protective glasses. Stop the engine immediately if you are approached.
- 4.8.6 Inspect the work area: To reduce the risk of injury, remove stones, pieces of metal and other solid objects which could be thrown 15 meters or more by the cutting attachment or damage the cutting



attachment and property (parked vehicles, windows).

- 4.8.7 This trimmer/brushcutter is normally to be used at ground level with the cutting attachment parallel to the ground. Use of a trimmer/brushcutter above ground level or with the cutting attachment perpendicular to the ground may increase the risk of injury, since the cutting attachment is more fully exposed, and the power tool may be more difficult to control. Never use your trimmer/brushcutter as a hedge trimmer
- 4.8.8 During cutting, check the tightness and the condition of the cutting attachment at regular short intervals with the engine and attachment stopped. If the behavior of the attachment changes during use, stop the engine immediately, wait until the cutting attachment stops, and check the nut securing the attachment for tightness and the blade or head for cracks, wear and damage.
- 4.8.9 A loose blade or head may vibrate, crack, break or come off the trimmer/brushcutter, which may result in serious or fatal injury. Make sure that the cutting attachment is properly tightened. Use the wrench supplied or one of sufficient length to obtain proper torque. If the blade or head loosens after being properly tightened, stop work immediately. The retaining nut may be worn or damaged and should be replaced. If the blade or head continues to be loose, see a proper manufacture dealer. Never use the trimmer/brushcutter with a loose cutting attachment.
- 4.8.10 Replace a cracked, damaged or worn out head or a cracked, bent, warped, damaged, dull or worn out blade immediately, even if damage is limited to superficial cracks. Such attachments may shatter at high speed and cause serious or fatal injury.
- 4.8.11 When using rigid blades, avoid cutting close to fences, sides of buildings, tree trunks, stones or other such objects that could cause the power tool to kick out or could cause damage to the blade. In addition, be alert to an increased possibility of ricochets in such situations.
- 4.8.12 If a rotating metal blade strikes a rock or other hard object, sparks may be created, which can ignite flammable materials under certain circumstances. Flammable materials can include dry vegetation and brush, particularly when weather conditions are hot and dry. When there is a risk of fire or wildfire, do not use metal blades around flammable materials or around dry vegetation or brush. Contact your local fire authorities or the U.S. Forestry Service if you have any question about whether vegetation and weather conditions are suitable for the use of a metal blade.
- 4.8.13 If the head, blade or deflector becomes clogged or stuck, always shut off the engine and make sure the cutting attachment has stopped before cleaning. Grass, weeds, etc. should be cleaned off the blade or from around the head at regular intervals.

4.8.14 To reduce the risk of unintentional rotation of the cutting attachment and injury, always shut off the engine and remove the spark plug boot before replacing the cutting attachment To reduce the risk of injury, always shut off the engine before adjusting the length of the nylon line on manually adjustable mowing heads.

4.8.15 The gearbox becomes hot during operation. To reduce the risk of burn injury, do not touch the gear housing when it is hot.

## 2.0 **TRAINING**

2.1 Training must be provided to all WFN employees assigned to use or work on a crew that use trimmer/brushcutters.

2.2 Training must include;

2.2.1.1 Safe use, operation and maintenance of chainsaws and associated tools

2.2.1.2 It is important to note that all makes have different mechanisms. The material used for this safety policy was taken from the STIHL safety manual. It is key to review the manufacturer's operating and maintenance instructions, warnings and precautions

2.2.1.3 Practical experience and demonstration of skills

2.2.1.4 Review of WFN policies and procedures

## 3.0 **REVIEW**

3.1 These regulations will be reviewed periodically by staff, Chief, and Council.