



## Short Safety Subject

Short Safety Subjects are provided by the Public Safety Business Center, Fort Bragg, NC. Our intent is to provide safety topics for the purpose of increasing safety awareness and improving safety performance. Additional Short Safety Subjects are available on the PSBC Business Management Web Site at:

[www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm](http://www.bragg.army.mil/psbc-bm/PubsAndForms/ShortSafetySubjects.htm)

### Brush Up On Snow Blower Safety



Before the snow needs to be brushed from your path is a good time to brush up on snow blower safety. Everyone should know the rules of safety before you actually need to use the blower. Snow blowers are potentially dangerous machines that need to be used carefully and with respect for their moving parts.

There are two basic types of snow blowers. A single-stage blower whirls the gathering/blowing auger at a very high speed. The two-stage blower has an additional auger for throwing snow out of the path. Though these usually are more completely enclosed, they can injure fingers. Exposed gears, drive chains and belts can also cause injuries.

- If the system is entirely new to you, read the instruction manual and its safety precautions before attempting to assemble or start the blower. It's surprising in how many instances the instruction manual isn't the top priority when it should be.
- When snowfall is predicted, inspect the area to be cleared of snow and remove objects that may cause personal injury, property damage or damage to the machine. Check the area again before operating the blower. Use a shovel to remove snow that may contain large stones and scraps of metal. Objects other than snow will usually be thrown farther than the snow discharge, so be alert to where the discharge chute is directed.
- Electric snow blowers have their own hazards. The electric motor is powerful enough to cause injury, and the addition of electricity is another potential hazard. Always know where the cord is when using an electric snow blower. If the electric cord becomes caught in the machine and is severed, severe shock or electrocution can result.
- To ensure optimum and safe performance, keep the snow blower in good condition. Check the engine oil level before starting. Check the adjustment and operation of the clutch, blower system, and chute positioning before each operating session. Even the tires need proper inflation for good performance. Be sure that the power cord of an electric snow blower is in good condition.
- Know how to stop the machine quickly and shut the engine off.
- To avoid back injury, get help if you must lift the blower to and from its storage place.
- Ensure that you wear all the appropriate Personnel Protective Equipment. Gloves, protective goggles and sturdy, non-skid boots, etc.
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages before or while operating a snowblower.

- Be especially careful on slopes and slippery terrain.
- Before allowing a youngster to handle snow removal, carefully consider the young person's age and maturity. Physical ability to handle the machine is important, but so are maturity and the ability to make good judgment decisions. Personal injury and property damage can easily result from errors in judgment.
- Keep all shields in place and keep hands and feet away from all moving parts. When a hand or foot is caught in any part of the snow blower, serious injury is likely to occur.
- If it is necessary to operate the engine in a garage or other enclosed space, open the doors and windows to provide sufficient ventilation.
- Never attempt to clear debris from the machine, make adjustments or change the throw direction of the discharge chute (unless a control is provided for this purpose near the handle) without first shutting off the engine and disconnecting the spark plug wire.
- If the thrower is electrically powered, unplug the power cord.
- Always check the fuel level before each use to avoid refilling the tank in the midst of plowing while the engine is hot. Wipe off any gasoline spills and be sure the tank cap is on snugly.
- Don't let people or pets walk or stand in the path of the blower's discharge. Not only can it hurl snow at high speed, it can also pick up ice, stones and other hard objects.
- Before pulling the starter rope, stand firmly, but keep your feet a safe distance from the auger.
- Don't leave the blower running unattended. Learn how to stop the engine quickly in case of emergency.
- Never loan your snow blower to anyone unfamiliar with its operation or with the safety rules governing it.
- Don't allow children or young teenagers to operate it.

It is always best to know the proper operation and safety tips of snow blower operations to prevent any unwanted mishaps. Snow can be a lot of fun, however, the injuries that result from the careless operation of machines to remove it, or navigate it, are not.