



West Bay Sanitary District Code of Safe Practice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Questions or comments regarding this
Code of Safe Practice should be directed
to the Regulatory Compliance Coordinator.

Power Blower, Backpack – Gasoline

This Code of Safe Practice shall be followed to provide a safe work practice while operating a leaf blower, backpack style, to provide safety to the operator and other personnel and the public.

Power blower users risk injury to themselves and others if the power blower is used improperly and/or safety precautions are not followed. Proper clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when operating a power blower.

GENERAL SAFETY

- Only trained and qualified operators are to operate this equipment. Workers should read and understand the manufacturer's operation and maintenance manual before operating or servicing the power blower.
- Pre-inspect the power blower before use and make sure it is in good working condition. Never allow leaks in the fuel system.
- Handle gasoline with care.
- Refuel before starting work.
- Do not smoke while handling fuel.
- Do not refuel a hot engine.
- Avoid spilling fuel or oil. Always wipe power blower dry before using.
- Always mix the gasoline/oil fuel mixture before adding it to the fuel tank.
- Move at least 10 feet away from the fueling point before starting engine.
- Always store gasoline in approved container.
- Always replace the lid on any fuel container.
- Use only "Safety Cans" equipped with anti-flashback nozzles.
- Do not operate in unventilated areas.
- Do not allow bystanders or animals in work area.

- Do not point the power blower in the direction of people or animals.
- Always wear safety glasses or goggles.
- Always wear hearing protectors.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing.
- Always use a dust filter mask to avoid breathing dust.
- Do not block power blower pipe.

HOT HUMID WEATHER

Heavy protective clothing can increase operator fatigue which may lead to heat stroke. Schedule heavy work for early morning or late afternoon hours when temperatures are cooler.

EXTENDED OPERATIONS/EXTREME CONDITIONS

VIBRATION AND COLD

It is believed that a condition called Reynaud's Phenomenon, which affects the fingers of certain individuals, may be brought about by exposure to vibration and cold. Exposure to vibration and cold may cause tingling and burning sensations followed by loss of color and numbness in the fingers. The following precautions are strongly recommended because the minimum exposure that might trigger the ailment is unknown.

- Keep you body warm, especially the head, neck, feet ankles, hands and wrists.
- Maintain good blood circulation by performing vigorous arm exercises during frequent work breaks and also by not smoking.
- Limit the hours of operation. Try to fill each day with jobs where operating the blower or other hand-held power equipment is not required.
- If you experience discomfort, redness and swelling of the fingers followed by whitening and loss of feeling, consult your physician before further exposing yourself to cold and vibration.

Repetitive Stress Injuries

It is believed that overusing the muscles and tendons of the fingers, hands, arms and shoulders may cause soreness, swelling, numbness, weakness and extreme pain in those areas. Certain repetitive hand activities may put you at a high risk for developing a Repetitive Stress Injury (RSI). An extreme RSI condition is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), which could occur when your wrist swells and squeezes a vital nerve that runs through the area. Some believe that prolonged exposure to vibration may contribute to CTS. CTS can cause severe pain for months or even years.

To reduce the risk of RSI/CTS, do the following:

- Avoid using your wrist in a bent, extended or twisted position. Instead try to maintain a straight wrist position. Also, when grasping, use your whole hand, not just the thumb and index finger.
- Take periodic breaks to minimize repetition and rest your hands.
- Reduce the speed and force in which you do the repetitive movement.
- Do exercises to strengthen the hand and arm muscles.
- Immediately stop using all power equipment and consult a doctor if you feel tingling, numbness or pain in the fingers, hands, wrists or arms. The sooner RSI/CTS is diagnosed, the more likely permanent nerve and muscle damage can be prevented.

EQUIPMENT

- Check power blower for loose/missing nuts, bolts and screws. Tighten and/or replace as needed.
- Inspect fuel lines, tank and area around carburetor for fuel leaks. DO NOT operate power blower if leaks are found.
- DO NOT use power blower if any part is missing or damaged.
- Have repairs done only by an authorized service dealer.
- DO NOT use any attachment, accessory or replacement part unless it is recommended in the owner’s manual.
- Avoid contact during and immediately after operation. Always keep exhaust area clear of flammable debris. Allow the engine and muffler to completely cool before performing any maintenance activity.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Protection Area	PPE Required
Eye	Wear eye protection that meets ANSI Z87.1 or CE requirements whenever you operate a power blower.
Face	Face shield when appropriate.
Hand	Wear no-slip, heavy-duty work gloves to improve your grip on the blower handle. Gloves also reduce the transmission of machine vibration to your hands.
Foot	Leather safety shoes or boots.
Head	
Body	Close fitting clothing.
Respiratory	Wear N95 or equivalent HEPA respirator.
Hearing	Wear earplugs or earmuffs as necessary. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for wearing hearing protection whenever using a power blower.
Clothing	Wear snug fitting, durable clothing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pants should have long legs, shirts with long sleeves. • DO NOT wear shorts. • DO NOT wear ties, scarves, jewelry. Wear sturdy work shoes with nonskid soles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO NOT wear open toed shoes. • DO NOT operate power blower barefooted. Keep long hair away from engine and blower intake. Retain hair with cap or hair net.

