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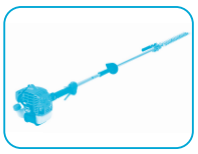
1653 Safety Guidance
v:112016

Long Reach Hedge Trimmer

The rules and procedures in force where people are at work may require the person responsible for this equipment to carry out a specific risk assessment.

It is important to read all of this leaflet BEFORE using the Long Reach Hedge Trimmer



1. Plan your work and think ahead to make sure you will always be working safely.
2. This hedge trimmer is a powerful cutting tool which can cause very serious injuries if not used properly. You must be fully competent to use it. Do not allow anyone else who is not fully competent to use it.
3. You must take great care at all times when working with the hedge trimmer. If you are in any doubt about how to use the trimmer, do not use it.
4. You must not work near overhead electric cables or supply lines, because there is a serious danger of fatal electric shock. Keep at least 15m (50 feet) away.
5. Petrol is highly flammable. Take care not to cause a fire or explosion.
6. This hedge trimmer is designed for cutting back and trimming tall hedges and shrubs. Do not try to use it to cut thick branches.
7. You should wear as a minimum, the following personal protective equipment: helmet EN397; goggles or face shield EN166; ear defenders EN352; SNR=25 minimum; strong gloves; secure boots or shoes with good non-slip soles.
8. Hedge trimmers must not be used by minors, or by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
9. Hedge trimmers are designed for use by an able bodied adult. Anyone with either temporary or permanent disability must seek expert advice before using them.

COMPETENT OPERATOR

1. You must be competent to use this hedge trimmer. Before you start work, check that you fully understand all of the following points. If there is anything you do not understand, do not use the hedge trimmer. Check with your employer, or the hire company.
2. You must understand the location, and function of all the controls;
3. The hazardous areas on the hedge;trimmer.
4. Hazards in the work area that you must avoid;
5. How to stand correctly when using the hedge trimmer and what the correct cutting action is; and
6. How to start, and stop, the hedge trimmer.

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Using the Long Reach Hedge Trimmer

1. Wear ALL of your protective equipment, then put the shoulder strap on.
2. Make sure that you have got a firm footing, and that there is no danger of you slipping or stumbling while working.
3. Start the hedge trimmer, then lift it and clip in onto the shoulder strap.
4. Make sure that the cutting blades do not accidentally touch anything. If they do, the hedge trimmer may kick back or cause an injury.
5. Always keep your left hand on the grip on the shaft, with your right hand on the control handle, controlling the throttle.
6. Let the shoulder harness carry the weight of the machine – this makes it easier to handle and control.
7. Make sure the cutting blade is running at full speed before starting to cut into the hedge.
8. Do not try to cut off thick twigs. This hedge trimmer is only for trimming foliage.
9. Do not try to cut off all growth in one pass: remove it one layer at a time. Make sure that you can control the amount you are removing before you take off the final layer.
10. Work with a steady swinging action from the bottom upwards when trimming hedge sides.
11. Beware of debris that may be thrown out by the trimming blade.
12. If the hedge trimmer starts to labour and slow down, do not force it so hard. Work at a steady speed so as not to overload the engine.
13. If anything jams in the blades while you are working, stop the machine and put it down. Wait until the blades have stopped completely before clearing the obstruction.
14. Do not cut close to the ground – stones and other debris can be thrown up, and the blades can be blunted.
15. Make sure that your work area remains clear – you may need to stop the hedge trimmer to move fallen material.
16. Stop the hedge trimmer before you put it down, or if you need to carry it anywhere. Put the blade cover back on.
17. The gearbox by the cutting blade can get hot after continuous use – be careful not to touch it.
18. You should always be alert when using the hedge trimmer. If you are tired, leave the job until another day.
19. Stop the engine if leaving the machine unattended.
20. Put the blade cover back on when you have finished work.
21. If your equipment does not work properly, do not attempt to repair it. Contact the hire company.

Please store this leaflet safely. It may be required for further information

v:112016

Before Starting Work...

WORK AREA

1. Do not use the hedge trimmer where there is a danger of coming into contact with the overhead electricity cables. You must keep at least 15m (50 feet) away from cables at all times - do not forget that electricity can jump across large gaps.
2. To reduce the risk of serious or fatal injury from breathing toxic fumes, never run the hedge trimmer indoors or in poorly ventilated locations.
3. Do not use this hedge trimmer where there is a danger of explosion. It will ignite fumes from petrol, or gas cylinders.
4. Make sure that the area is clear and safe, with not ripping hazards, and that no-one is near to you or could distract you.
5. Protect other people from the noise and from danger. Warn others to keep away, put up warning signs or barriers around your work area.
6. Check that you have room to work, and can reach the area to be trimmed, without putting yourself in danger.
7. If you need to work from a ladder or a platform, it must be secure and safe, with full protection against falls. Contact the hire company if you need this equipment.
8. Do not use the hedge trimmer for trimming hedges that may have fence wire or other foreign bodies in them.

OPERATORS

1. All operators must be competent to use the hedge trimmer. You must not allow anyone who does not have the required competence to use the hedge trimmer.
2. The following items of personal protective equipment (ppe) are the minimum that should be worn whenever you use this hedge trimmer. Particular jobs or environments may require a higher level of protection.
3. You must wear a face shield or goggles (EN 166) when you are working with this machine.
4. This equipment is likely to cause noise levels up to 104 dB(A) – wear ear defenders (EN352; SNR=25) giving hearing protection for this level as a minimum.
5. You must wear a safety helmet (EN397) when working with this machine. Tie up any long hair to prevent it getting caught in the machine.
6. Protect your hands with heavy duty gloves.
7. Wear secure boots or shoes with good non-slip soles.
8. Anybody who is working near to you will also need to wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

HEDGE TRIMMERS

1. Check your hedge trimmer, engine, shaft, any hand guard that is fitted, and all equipment. Do not use anything found damaged – contact the hire company.
2. Do not try to use this hedge trimmer for any work other than trimming standing hedges. If you need to cut branches, you should consider using a suitable saw – contact the hire company for this.
3. Put the shoulder strap on, and adjust its length so that the hedge trimmer is supported comfortably near your right hip.
4. Make sure that you understand all of the controls. Before you start the hedge trimmer, you must know how to stop it.

REFUELLING

1. No smoking.
2. Use a fresh mixture of two stroke engine oil with petrol. If the hire company have given you special instructions on how much oil to use, follow them. Otherwise use 1 measure of two stroke oil to 25 measures of petrol (40ml per litre).
3. Stop the engine and let it cool down.
4. If possible, move the machine away from your work area.
5. Clean the filler cap and the area around it to prevent dirt falling into the fuel tank.
6. Shake the fuel can to mix the petrol and oil.
7. Use a funnel when refueling. Do not spill any fuel on yourself or the machine.
8. Wipe any fuel off the machine. Dispose of fuel soaked cloth carefully.
9. If you spill any fuel on the ground, wipe it up or cover it with soil.
10. If you spill any fuel on your clothes, change them straight away.
11. Put all fuel caps back on properly, and move your fuel can to a safe, cool place.

STARTING THE HEDGE TRIMMER CONTROLS

1. This is a brief description of the controls found on most hedge trimmers. Check your hedge trimmer to find the controls before you try to start it.
2. There is an interlock control on the throttle trigger, to prevent the throttle being squeezed or pressed accidentally. You always need to press the interlock in before you can squeeze the throttle.
3. The main control lever has two positions. Under normal running it is at the RUN position. To stop the hedge trimmer, push the control lever forward to the STOP position.
4. Your machine may have a fuel primer bulb. This is used to draw fuel from the fuel tank when you first start the machine from cold.
5. Your machine may have a decompression valve. This is only used when starting the hedge trimmer – it needs to be pressed before each fresh attempt to start the engine.
6. The choke control should only be used when first attempting to start the engine from cold.

STARTING (FROM COLD)

1. This is a brief description of the starting procedure for most hedge trimmers. If the hire company has given you special instructions for your hedge trimmer, follow them. Otherwise, follow the instructions given below.
2. Pull the control lever back to the run position.
3. Set the choke lever to the choke position if the engine is cold. If the engine is warm, the choke control should be in the normal running position.
4. If your hedge trimmer has a fuel primer bulb, press it two or three times to draw fuel through from the fuel tank. You will not need to do this again.
5. If your hedge trimmer has a decompression valve, set it. You need to set the decompression valve each time a fresh attempt is made to start the engine.
6. Place the hedge trimmer squarely on its base plate on the ground. Take off the blade cover, and make sure that the cutting blades are not touching the ground or any obstruction.
7. Hold the hedge trimmer firmly, with your left hand on the body of the machine.
8. With your right hand, pull out the starter handle slowly until you can feel that the starter has engaged with the engine, then pull it quickly and strongly. Don't pull it too far, or it may break.
9. Guide the cord back into place so that it recoils correctly.
10. If the engine is now running, set the choke control to normal running position.
11. In cold weather, you may need to let the engine warm up by gently opening the throttle, before starting work.

ONCE THE HEDGE TRIMMER IS RUNNING

1. Check that the hedge trimmer blades run freely, and stop when the throttle control is released.
2. Move the control lever to the stop position to check that the hedge trimmer stops properly.

Useful Reference Points • www.hae.org.uk/businessguard