

006.4.1 Safe Operating Procedure

ECM Registration Details (WHS Use Only)	Précis	Safety – SOP number – Task	
	Customer	WHSIM Section	
	Subject	Safety – Section – Safe Work Method Statements	
	Class Name	Safety	
Branch:	Risk Management	Version:	16
Responsible Officer:	WHS Coordinator	Reviewed Date:	June 2022
Approved by:	Manager Risk Management	Next Review Date:	June 2025

Machine to be operated	BRUSH CUTTER / WHIPPER SNIPPER		
SOP Reference no.	SOP 016		
Date Reviewed:	July 2022	Date next Review:	July 2025
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Qualifications / Certificates of Competency / Training / Experience Required:
 On the job training, Plant induction

Personal Protective Equipment Required: The PPE items ticked below are the minimum mandatory requirements that must be worn when operating this equipment.

						
Harness	High visibility vest	Sunscreen	Hard hat	Disposable Overalls	Disposable Mask	Hearing Protection
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
						
Safety Glasses	Face Shield	Goggles	Gloves	Safety footwear		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Safety Information DO NOT USE THIS EQUIPMENT UNLESS YOU ARE TRAINED IN SAFE USE OF OPERATION AND AUTHORISED TO USE

Potential Hazards

Chain of Responsibility	Alcohol and other drugs	Fatigue	Flying debris
Noise	Fire / Explosion	Ejected materials	Fumes
Vibration			

Operating Procedure



Pre Use / Set Up Checks

- Check Master stop, side control button for easy movement
- Ensure cutting tool guard, rider plate are in good condition
- Ensure handles dry and clean - free from oil and pitch - for safe control of the machine.
- Inspect fuel lines, tank, and area around carburettor for fuel leaks. Do not operate unit if leaks are found.
- Check that the spark plug boot is firmly seated.
- Ensure safety signs are placed according to control requirements.
- Do not allow any other persons within a radius of 15 meters of the operating position
- Assess work area and ensure there are no persons or animals n
- Check that the brush cutter is clean and free of grass and build-up
- Clear the work area of stones, sticks, wire, bottles and other objects.
- Ensure the blade unit has a debris shield
- Select the correct cutting tool for the task to be undertaken - refer to manufacturer's specification.
- Load the nylon line cutting head only with nylon trimmer line of the proper diameter.
- Do not operate if the line cutter is missing.
- Before operating unit, thoroughly inspect blades for damage and cracks.
- Faulty equipment must not be used. Report defect machinery immediately.

Fitting the Harness

- Determine which side of the body is preferable to work the brush cutter.
- Place the shoulder strap/ harness over the head and rest with the hook against the hip on the preferred working side.
- Adjust the length until the spring hook is about a hand's width below your right hip

- Ensure the strap cushions are comfortably over the shoulder blade and collarbone.
 - Attach the spring hook to the clamp on the drive shaft – slacken the screw.
 - Slide the clamp up or down the shaft for comfort
 - Tighten the screw moderately
 - Let go of the brush cutter and check to see how it is balanced
 - Grass cutting tools should just touch the ground
- Circular saw blades should hover about 20 cm from the ground.

Start Up / Operation

- Move at least 3 meters away from refuelling location before starting
- Always have an escape route available for emergencies.
- Place the brush cutter / whipper snipper on level ground, clear away any obstructions
- Turn on and clear away any obstructions especially near the front of the cutting blade
- Keep feet away from the blades or cord.
- Place one hand on the machine and operate the starter with the other hand.
- Make sure your attention does not slip while operating the implement – especially watch for trip hazards.
- Keep a firm grip with both hands and keep the blade or cutting cord clear of your body.
- Hold down the throttle trigger interlock located on back of hand grip and squeeze the throttle trigger
- While holding both levers in this position, move slide control to START and hold it there
- Release the throttle trigger, slide control and throttle trigger interlock in that order.
- Controls are now in the starting position

If cold starting, engage choke.

- Press the fuel pump bulb five times
- Place the unit on the ground resting securely on the engine support and deflector
- Hold the unit firmly on the ground with the left hand – Do Not stand or kneel on the shaft
- Pull the starter cord slowly with your right hand until you feel it engage.
- Maintain a straight back and using the arms only, briskly pull the starter cord
- Disengage the choke when engine starts to fire

Start Up / Operation

Operation

- Brush cutter must only be operated in open space or a well-ventilated area.
- Ensure signs have been erected to prohibit persons from entering area where brush cutting is taking place. Install traffic control if cutting near the edge of the road if required.
- Before starting to cut, accelerate the engine up to full throttle.
- Cut grass in forward motion only.
- Grass is best undertaken using the sweeping technique. Cut direction in front of the operator's body, and then sweep the cutter across the front on the opposite side to where the harness is attached.
- Cutting shall be done only with cutter horizontal or close to horizontal. The cutter shall not be used while in the vertical position.
- Cutting to be done only along the ground. Do not cut shrubs or branches or any object above knee height.
- Ensure a solid footing on wet ground / slopes
- When cutting near roads, pathways or other areas where persons or property may get damaged
- Cut with the blade rotating in the direction away from the property. If necessary, wait until property/persons are removed before cutting.
- Shut down immediately if the unit starts to shake or vibrate.
- Stop and switch off the engine if you hit an object.
- Do not use the machine again until you are sure that the entire machine is safe to operate.
- Do not use brush cutter / whipper snipper if it is making unusual noise or vibration

Replacing blades/trimming wire

- Ensure equipment is turned off and blade area has stopped rotating.
- Lay the unit on its back with the gear head facing upward
- Insert the stop pin into the gear head. Rotate the shaft until the stop pin slips into position and blocks the shaft.
- Unscrew the mounting nut and remove the thrust washer. Fit required cutting tool.
- Refit the thrust washer and tighten the mounting nut – REMOVE THE STOP PIN
- Adjusting the nylon line

- Hold the rotating head horizontal above the ground. Tap it on the ground.

About 3 cm of line is advanced. Blade on deflector is trims to correct length

Shut Down

- Turn machine off, Turn fuel off
- Allow the machine to cool before storing
- Clean machine and Store machine in a ventilated area

Post Use Checks

- Thoroughly check the equipment for any damage.
- Report any equipment damage to the Supervisor
- Place Safety Tag (Out Of Service – Do Not Operate) on the equipment until repaired

Service and Maintenance – To be conducted in accordance with the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) Instructions, Australian Standards and Legislative requirements. Isolation of all energy sources must be implemented as per 007.7 Isolation.

- As per Manufacturer's instructions

Transport and Storage

- Always turn off the engine
- Carry the unit suspended from harness or balanced by the drive tube
- If the unit is detached from harness, cover the metal cutting tool with the guard
- When transporting in vehicle, secure the unit to prevent turnover, fuel spillage or damage
- Store brush cutter / whipper snipper in appropriate location

Refuelling

- Always shut the engine before refuelling and allow to cool
- Do not smoke, do not fill the tank near open flames/ignition sources
- Ensure the area around the fuel tank is clean
- Remove the fuel filler cap carefully so as to allow any pressure build-up in the tank to release slowly
- Use correct equipment i.e. funnel
- Fill the fuel tank in an open /well-ventilated area
- Wipe off any spilled fuel before starting
- Do not syphon the fuel
- Avoid direct contact with the skin and avoid inhaling fuel vapor.
- Tighten the fuel cap firmly to avoid fuel spillage
- Move at least 3 meters away from fuel before restarting Brush cutter
- Avoid spilling fuel or oil. Spilled fuel must be immediately cleaned up.
- Have sand or saw dust available if spills occur
- Store fuel in cool place and in approved container
- Keep fire extinguisher nearby in case of emergency