



SHIFT BRIEFING



SNOW BLOWER BEST PRACTICES

Snowblower accidents lead to roughly 5,700 injuries each year, including amputations, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Typically, these are caused by operators trying to clear a clogged auger or discharge chute with their hands.

REMEMBER: There is little clearance between the outer ends of the auger or impeller and the inside surface of the housing.

Operators:

- Review the Operator's Manual at the beginning of each snow season. Understand the operating characteristics of your machine.
 - Single-stage snow blowers use an auger assembly made from a combination of metal and plastic. The auger spins at high speed to chip ice and snow, collect it, and direct it out of a discharge chute. Though not propelled by engine-driven wheels, the spinning auger contacts the clearing surface and pulls the assembly forward.
 - Two-Stage blowers have an additional spinning impeller behind the snow collection auger. The impeller acts like a pump. It collects the snow churned by the main auger and pushes it from the discharge chute at increased speed.
- Review the pre-use checklist.
- Check the snow blower before use to make sure it is functioning properly. Don't run gasoline-powered equipment indoors (including the pre-use check), because of the danger of carbon monoxide exposure.
 - Do a 360 check to look for general problems and obstructions on the machine.
 - Check Guards, shields, deflectors, and warning decals.
 - Do not modify, change, bypass, or disable the auger/impeller interlock and traction interlock.
 - Do not disable any safety feature because it seems to be an inconvenience
- Prepare for the climate: Staying warm and dry is important to prevent hypothermia. Dress in layers of clothing, so you can remove outerwear if you get too warm. Protect your hands and toes from freezing which may cause frostbite. Wear waterproof footwear and clothing. Boots with anti-slip features can prevent falling on the ice often found on paved surfaces under the snow.

Operating Tips:

- Walk slowly and use small steps (think of a penguin). Move deliberately and cautiously.
- Moving slowly also minimizes the risk of overloading the machine.
- Keep a firm hold on the machine with both hands.
- Do not use a snow thrower on steep slopes. **What is the steepest slope we can use our snow blower(s) on?**
- Make sure you don't hit obstructions such as curbs or tree roots.
- Watch your hands and feet. Keep them away from moving augers/impellers, hot mufflers, and engine parts.