

Snow Blower Safety

By: John Juresic, Loss Control Consultant, Thomas McGee, L.C.

Snow Blower Safety

Snow removal can be hard on the body when you must clear a large area with only a shovel, especially after a heavy snow. Using a snow blower may be the perfect way to give your back a break. However, it is important to take the proper safety precautions to avoid unnecessary injury while clearing snow this winter.

Dress for the Job

Clearing snow can be a cold job. Dress properly not only to keep yourself warm, but also to keep yourself safe.

- Wear boots that will give you adequate traction while walking behind the blower.
- Wear gloves that allow you to firmly grip the snow blower and do not interfere with its operation.
- Wear eye protection.
- Avoid long scarves or other loose clothing that could become caught in the snow blower's moving parts during servicing or operation.

Before Use

Go through these steps before you begin to clear snow:

- Familiarize yourself with the snow blower's operations manual.
- Inspect the area that you are about to clear. Look for things that may be hidden under the snow like doormats or newspapers.
- Check the snow blower's oil level before each use.
- Never start the snow blower indoors. If you are in a garage, make sure the door is open before you start the machine.

Editor's Note:

The KING Safety Matters newsletter is published monthly to provide general safety information. It is not a substitute for adequate safety training, or intended to provide complete safety information or training, on any specific subject. The information contained herein is intended to assist safety efforts and increase safety awareness.

To ensure the contents of the newsletter are helpful and important to you, please feel free to send comments, suggestions and feedback to:

John Juresic
Loss Control Consultant
Thomas McGee L.C.
jjuresic@thomasmcgee.com

Kevin McFarland
President
KING
kevin@leadingagekansas.org



Clearing Snow

While running the snow blower:

- Be aware of where you are aiming the shoot. Rocks and ice can become dangerous missiles if picked up by the blower.
- Never blow snow toward people or cars.
- Keep your hands and feet away from all moving parts.
- Never override automatic shutoff features.
- Do not operate the snow blower on a steep incline.
- Operate the blower at a speed no faster than a walk.

Clogs and Jams

If something becomes stuck in the snow blower:

- Turn the machine off and wait until all moving parts have stopped before attempting to fix anything. Never reach into the blower shoot with your hands for any reason, even if the machine is off. Use a stick to work any debris out of the shoot.

Proper Maintenance Counts

Proper snow blower maintenance is important to ensure smooth operation.

- Always add fresh fuel and oil at the start of each season; also, check the spark plug.
- If you are using an electric snow blower or an electric start for a gas-powered blower, make sure any power cords being used are in good condition
- Maintain proper tire pressure to provide the best handling.
- Run all the fuel out of the snow blower before storing it at the end of each season.

*Reference: OSHA.gov.
Risk Strategies*

