

Fencing FACTSHEET



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FENCE CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

This factsheet outlines both Workers' Compensation Board and general fence construction safety concerns.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

WorkSafeBC Requirements

Numerous safety concerns are associated with fence construction. Many are related to either the rugged terrain or the type of equipment used. Specific practices to minimize dangers are outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* issued by WorkSafeBC.

Fencing Equipment

The numbered items below refer to specific agriculturally-related sections within the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Post-Hole Diggers

Clause 28.20. A post-hole digger must have:

- (a) the tractor or machine brakes set before digging
- (b) shear bolts as specified by the manufacturer
- (c) a hold-to-run control (deadman switch) when operated as a hand-held unit

Post Drivers

Clause 28.21. A worker operating post drivers must:

- (a) lower the hammer and stop the engine when adjustment or maintenance is required
- (b) if necessary for safety, steady the post with a steady fork or guide
- (c) lower or block the hammer when the machine is not in use

Chain Saws (Standards)

Clause 12.72. A chain saw must:

- (a) meet the requirements of *CSA Standard Z62.1-95, Chain Saws*
- (b) have a chain brake that activates automatically upon kickback regardless of the position of the power head or operator's hands.
- (c) A chain saw manufactured before January 1, 1999, with a guide bar exceeding 66 centimetres (26 inches), measured from the top of the cutters at the bar tip to the point of the "dogs" or "bumper spikes", is exempt from the requirement for a chain brake.

Chain Saws (Stopping Chain Movement)

Clause 12.73. A chain saw chain must be stopped before the saw operator moves from cut to cut, unless the next cut is in the immediate area and the saw operator can safely move to the next cutting position.

Chain Saws (Operation)

When using a chain saw, clothing should be worn which protects the operator from scrapes and scratches and allows freedom of movement. Read the WorkSafeBC brochure entitled *Chainsaw Safety* to find out more about maintenance, chain filing, refueling, and first aid.

General Protection for Workers

Other general items of safety concern are also covered in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation as shown below. The clause numbers correspond directly with those in the regulation. Full details are specified in the regulation.

Safety Footwear

Clause 8.22. Footwear should be appropriate to the working situation. Examples could include the requirement to wear leather, puncture-resistant soles or steel toes.

Hand Protection

Clause 8.19. Hand protection should be worn as conditions require.

Eye Protection

Clause 8.14. Properly fitting safety eyewear appropriate to the conditions of the workplace must be worn.

Clause 8.15. Prescription safety eyewear must meet the requirements of CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.3-92, Industrial Eye and Face Protectors.

Noise Exposure

Noise Limits

Clause 7.1. An employer must ensure that a worker is not exposed to noise levels above either of the following exposure limits:

- (a) 85 dBA Lex daily noise exposure level
- (b) 140 dBC peak sound level

Noise Standards

Clause 7.3. The noise exposure measurement must be performed in accordance with CSA Standard Z107.56-94, Procedures for the Measurement of Occupational Noise Exposure.

Moving Machinery

Several concerns associated with the operation of moving machinery are highlighted below. Loose clothing should be avoided around rotating parts, in particular.

Equipment Guarding and Agricultural Tractors

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation also refers to tractor safety concerns. Two of note in conjunction with fencing are as follows.

Power Take-Off Devices

Clause 28.16. At conspicuous locations near rotating shafts driven by power take-off devices, warning signs must be located specifying that shields must be kept in place.

Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS)

Clauses 16.22, 16.23, 28.38, 28.39, 28.40 and 28.41. The types of tractors and detailed standards for rollover protection are specified in these six clauses.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY

General Concerns

Other general common sense safety concerns associated with fencing are highlighted below.

- Wear tightly woven, tough clothing that will not catch on the ends of wire.
 - Wear heavy duty, snug fitting gloves when handling treated posts.
 - Wear long pants and high ankle work boots with heavy soles and steel toes.
 - Wear safety goggles or eye shields when cutting or tensioning wire and driving nails or staples.
 - Wear a hard hat and ear plugs or earmuffs when operating a power post driver.
 - Never carry nails or staples in pants pockets; use a nail apron or tool bag.
 - Use proper shields on power equipment.
 - Keep children and livestock away from all fencing operations
 - When handling or working on chemically treated wood protect exposed skin (gloves, face shields, etc.).
 - Pick up all cut ends of wire, dropped staples and nails, etc. so they will not cause injury to other people or livestock.
 - Stop all fencing operations during electrical storms.
 - Install proper ground wires to wire fences as soon as they are erected.
 - Wire is an excellent conductor; be careful around overhead power wires.
 - Care must be taken when handling and cutting all fence wire, especially high tensile wire. While low tensile or 'soft' wire is relatively 'limp' when cut, high tensile wire is extremely 'springy' and may injure the unsuspecting worker. Both ends of the cut wire must be restrained or at least the worker must be aware of where the loose cut end may go. To avoid the wire curling up or rolling back to its' supply drum, stick the wire end into the ground 3 or 4 inches to restrain it.
 - High quality cutting pliers are required to allow high tensile wire to be cut with a 'normal' effort. Standard cutters will require too much effort to cut this wire.
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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