



Mission Success Starts With Safety



Monthly SSC Construction Contractor Meeting:

Safety Presentation

Pressure Washer Safety

April 01, 2021



Pressure Washer Safety



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

Pressure washers are used to clean equipment, materials and work areas on the job. At home, they may be used for washing automobiles, house exteriors and other uses. They can also cause injuries. Because the water is under pressure, it moves with enough force to cause damage to the eyes or skin and contribute to other types of injuries. Close contact with a pressure washer's flow to your skin abrades away the skin layer by layer, rather than cuts, and causes injuries that are hard to heal and scar for life. The noise can also damage hearing.

Safe Plan of Action

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends several tips to help prevent injuries when operating a pressure washer. Its No. 1 piece of advice: Never point a pressure washer at yourself or other people! Recommendations also include: Test the ground fault circuit interrupter before use. If you must use an extension cord, keep the washer's power cord connection out of standing water. Use a cord rated for use in wet environments. Wear rubber-soled shoes to help provide insulation.

A pressure washer's intense spray can cause wounds and other serious injuries that may at first appear minor. This may result in an injured person delaying treatment – putting themselves at increased risk for infection, disability or amputation. Anyone who suffers pressure washer-related wounds should seek medical attention right away.

Pressure Washer Safety

A pressure washer is an effective tool if used properly, but there are risks. The fast, strong spray can throw objects that strike and injure others who are close by. Electric shock can occur if the pressure washer is not used properly and if safety instructions are not followed. Using small, gasoline-powered engines can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Do not use any equipment powered by gasoline engines inside buildings or other partially enclosed spaces unless the gasoline engine can be placed outdoors and away from air intakes.

For safer use of a pressure washer, follow these precautions:

- Never point a pressure washer at yourself or others.
- Never attempt to push or move objects with spray from the washer.
- Never remove the grounding prong from the pressure washer's power cord plug.
- Always test the ground fault circuit interrupter (circuit breaker or outlet) before using a pressure washer.
- Always have a qualified electrician check the pressure washer for electrical problems after it has tripped a circuit breaker.
- Always wear eye and hearing protection when you use a pressure washer.
- Always wear proper clothing (preferably long pants and sleeves) when using a pressure washer.



- Always hold the spray wand with both hands.
- Never allow children to operate a pressure washer and keep them at a safe distance when an adult is using one.

If you are hurt by a pressure washer:

- Call 911 if emergency help is needed.
- Before treating the wound, wash your hands with soap and clean water. Put pressure on the wound with a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- After bleeding has stopped, pour clean water over the wound and clean around the wound with soap and water. Pat dry and use an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth to cover the wound. Leave unclean wounds open.

When using a pressure washer, always follow the safety instructions included in the owner's manual.