

# CHOPPING WOOD SAFETY

As fall approaches, many people begin the annual task of chopping firewood for the winter months ahead. But chopping wood can put you at risk for more than just splinters. This activity requires heavy lifting, repetitive movements, and using very sharp tools (typically an axe) which can put you at risk for lacerations, amputated fingers, shoulder, arm and wrist strains, and more.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY TIPS:

- **CHOPPING WOOD USING AN AXE**
- **CHOPPING WOOD USING A WOOD SPLITTER**



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# CHOPPING WOOD



## When chopping wood, always wear the following PPE:

- Protective Eye Wear
- Hard Hat
- Safety Gloves
- Steel Toed Boots
- If you are using a chainsaw, wear bucking pants and a face shield.

## Choose a Good Chopping Block

A chopping block is fundamental safety tool for chopping wood. Splitting on an elevated block that is placed on a level surface ensures the axe is further away from your feet and also decreases the chances of the axe hitting the ground. Using a block also provides more splitting power. A good chopping block should be:

- Sturdy and broad
- Heavy
- Cut evenly at both ends
- Placed on a level surface

## Chopping Wood Safely:

When splitting wood, start with the right tools, the proper technique and consider the following tips.

- Use the right equipment and inspect it before you use it to ensure it is safe to use.
- Wear PPE
- Position yourself with your legs well apart. It may help to bend your knees slightly before you strike.
- Raise the axe up behind your head or over your shoulder. **Never swing the axe around your body.**
- Keep your arms extended.
- Keep your non-dominant hand at the base of the axe with your dominant hand near the head of the axe.
- When you swing the axe, the hand nearest the head of the axe should slide down the handle shaft.
- Place the log vertically on the chopping block and strike from the top. If the log is uneven, turn it upside down.
- Know when to quit. If you're tired, stop. That's when injuries occur so save some energy for the next day.

## Using a Wood Splitter

Use the following steps to safely and effectively chop your firewood using a wood splitter:

- Read the operating manual before you start to use the wood splitter
- Always hold the wood by its side (never the ends) when loading a log into the splitter.
- Make sure the wood is stable while it gently eases it into the machine.
- Never shove the wood in or use body parts to stabilize the wood.
- Never split more than one log at a time.
- Ensure that the squarest side of the log is up against the blade.

**Follow safe procedures. Keep children out of the immediate area when you are chopping wood with an axe or using a wood splitter.**

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