



157th ARW Safety Savvy

SnowBlower Safety



Although it doesn't look like there is a lot of snow outside right now, but there's still a lot of winter left before spring shows up. When the snow gets deeper, the number of snowblower-related injuries increases. Snowblower-related injuries have been on the rise in recent years, with more than 5,000 injuries reported each year in the United States. Snowblowers are potentially dangerous machines that need to be used carefully and with respect for their moving parts.

There are two basic types of snowblowers. A single-stage blower whirls the gathering/blowing auger at a very high speed. The slower-moving gathering auger of the two-stage blower has more power. When a hand or foot is caught in any part of the snowblower, serious injury is likely.



The following are a few tips to help keep you from getting injured (as long as you follow them).....

Before operating the snowblower, inspect the area in which you are going to clear snow. Remove debris and other obstacles the snowblower might strike or throw, as that may cause injury or damage to the snowblower.

Inspect the snowblower before operating it. Repair any damage and correct any malfunction before operation. If you hit an obstacle while operating the snowblower, stop the engine immediately, and check for damage. Damaged equipment may increase the possibility of injury during operation.

Do not use the snowblower when visibility is poor. Under conditions of poor visibility, there is a greater risk of striking an obstacle or causing injury.

Never use the snowblower to clear snow from a gravel road or driveway, as rocks may be picked up and ejected. They may cause injury to bystanders.

Adjust the discharge chute to avoid hitting the operator, bystanders, windows, and other objects with ejected snow. **Stay clear of the snow discharge chute while the engine is running.**

Children and pets must be kept away from the area of operation to avoid injury from flying debris and contact with the snowblower.

To avoid overturning, be careful when changing the direction of the snowblower while operating it on a slope. Do not use the snowblower to remove snow from roofs. The snowblower may overturn on steep slopes if left unattended, causing injury to the operator or bystanders.

Know how to stop the snowblower quickly, and understand the operations of all controls.

Never permit anyone to operate the snowblower without proper instruction. If people or pets suddenly appear in front of the snowblower while it is in operation, immediately release the auger and drive clutch levers to stop the snowblower and avoid possible injury from rotating auger blades.

Refuel in a well-ventilated area with the engine stopped. Do not overfill the fuel tank and make sure the filler cap is closed securely after refueling.

Never run the engine in an enclosed or confined area. Exhaust contains poisonous carbon monoxide gas; exposure can cause loss of consciousness and may lead to death.

The muffler becomes very **hot** during operation and remains **hot** for a while after stopping the engine. Be careful not to touch the muffler while it is hot. Let the engine cool before storing the snowblower indoors.



"My dad bought a new snow blower. Now the snow hits me in the face with even more velocity."

While operating the snowblower, hold the handle firmly, and **walk, don't run**. Wear suitable winter boots that resist slipping.

Always keep equipment in good operating condition.

Always keep guards and shields in place.

Wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Always wear eye, face, and hearing protection.

Never clear snow across the face of a slope. Always turn toward the down side, when turning on a sloped area.

Always keep hands, feet, and clothing away from the snowblower and discharge chute when the auger is turning.

Do not disable your snow blower's operator presence control. Most snow blowers built since 1975 have an operator presence control (OPC) that causes the snow blower to stop when the user lets go of the controls.



If the chute or auger backs up (clogs) follow these steps:

- ✓ Turn off the machine.
- ✓ Wait five seconds after shutting the machine off to allow impeller blades to stop rotating.
- ✓ Remove the spark plug wire.
- ✓ Use a stick or broom handle to free the snow or debris.
- ✓ Never, ever, reach into or place your hands in the auger housing or chute.



**From Your Risk
Management Staff**

Maintaining your snow blower

Snow blowers don't require a lot of upkeep, but some periodic maintenance particularly in the spring will ensure it works well for you for a number of years.

- Drain the gas from the tank or add stabilizer to the gas tank so the gasoline won't solidify and your engine will start easily next fall.
- Drain the old engine oil and add fresh oil for next year.
- Check for loose and frayed drive belts and replace any that are stretched or worn.
- Check the tires for wear and inflate them to the proper pressure.
- Lubricate the drive mechanism as well as the auger and impeller movements.
- In the fall installing a new sparkplug (at last every second year) will ensure your engine runs smoothly.



This document was derived from multiple sources. Sources are available upon request in the 157 ARW/SE Office.