

OAK RIDGES TRAIL ASSOCIATION (ORTA)

SAFETY POLICY FOR TRAIL WORKERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers and employees participating in the construction and maintenance of the Oak Ridges Trail do so in a safe manner, thereby minimizing risk of injury and associated liability to the ORTA and its officers.

It is ORTA's duty to adopt reasonable standards, and to ensure that they are being applied on the Trail. All volunteers and employees shall be made aware of this policy.

1.2 TRAIL WORK

- (a) Trail workers should be made aware of the hazards and risks involved in the work to be done.
- (b) Trail workers participating in trail building or maintenance should sign an acknowledgement of risk and waiver of liability form (Appendix A).
- (c) Written documentation should be prepared for the project, describing the work; when, where, who is involved, expectations. This should be filed along with the above-mentioned waiver forms.
- (d) Trail work must only be done at the instruction of a Trail Captain or Chapter Chair. The Trail Captain, Chapter Chair or their designate shall be present and undertake responsibility for all trail work.
- (e) New trail construction must be done with the landowner's prior knowledge and approval including approval of the specific details of the physical construction planned.
- (f) Maintenance of the existing trail must be conducted within the restrictions and limitations specified in any land use agreement signed by the association and the landowner.
- (g) Trail building and maintenance should be done only by those who have been trained and equipped for the tasks at hand.

- (h) Trail workers should not work alone in situations involving the use of power equipment, climbing, or other increased risk activities.
- (i) Power equipment (e.g. chainsaws, brush cutters) must only be operated by trained persons or those whose experience with such machinery can be verified (examples: groundskeeper, farmer). Power equipment must never be used by inexperienced operators.
- (j) Safety equipment must be worn at all times when using powered equipment.
- (k) When repairs are required to the trail, the Trail Captain or Chapter Chair should determine who has the primary responsibility to make the repair. For example, removal of a large fallen tree may be the responsibility of a conservation authority, on whose land the trail exists, and which has the trained and experienced staff to remove the tree.

2.0 USE OF EQUIPMENT

2.1 SAFETY

- (a) Power equipment includes, but is not limited to, chain saws, string trimmers, brush cutters, and any other machinery which is powered by gasoline or electricity. Battery-operated equipment is not included.
- (b) All operators of power equipment shall be properly trained in the safe use of the equipment (see Training).
- (c) All operators of power equipment shall use appropriate safety equipment and protective clothing. ORTA will provide same if the operator does not possess it.
- (d) All work crews should include at least one person trained in first aid and this person should not be operating power equipment.
- (e) In the case of chainsaws and brush cutters, appropriate safety equipment consists of a minimum of:
 - hard hat with eye and ear protection
 - CSA approved safety boots
 - chainsaw pants or chaps
 - chainsaw gloves

In the case of string trimmers, appropriate safety equipment consists of a minimum of:

- eye and ear protection
- high top safety boots
- long pants made of heavy material
- heavy-duty, non-slip gloves

2.2 TRAINING

- (a) Operators of chainsaws must have verifiable experience or have completed an approved chainsaw safety course.
- (b) ORTA may arrange training courses depending upon need and availability.
- (c) The Trail Director will maintain a list of approved chainsaw safety courses.
- (d) ORTA will reimburse the cost of required training courses.
- (e) Training courses are offered by some community colleges, equipment manufacturers and distributors, the Bruce Trail Association, the Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association, the Construction Safety Association of Ontario, Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association, and others. Courses may also be offered by your local Ministry of Natural Resources or Conservation Authority office.
- (f) A list of trained, qualified persons will be kept by ORTA.

2.3 OPERATING TIPS

- (a) During the use of a chainsaw, two people besides the operator should be present to ensure safety of the operator and any other persons in the vicinity. One person should be positioned on the trail to each side of the chainsaw operator to warn any approaching hikers.
- (b) The brush cutter operator must be given a wide berth; concentration on controlling the swath and the direction of the blade coupled with the noise of the machine will make the operator oblivious to other workers "in the way".
- (c) Operating a brush cutter can be tiring when used continuously for long periods. It is recommended that a second qualified person be present to take turns operating the machine.
- (d) One person should precede the cutter to remove rocks, branches, bottles, cans and other debris which could become a projectile or damage the equipment.

APPENDIX A

**OAK RIDGES TRAIL ASSOCIATION TRAIL WORK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of RISK and WAIVER of LIABILITY**

Those signing below acknowledge that there is some level of risk in working on the project described below and releases ORTA and its officers from liability in case of accident or injury.

Description of project

Date of Project _____ Expected duration (hrs.) _____

Work Project Leader _____

| Worker's Name | Signature | Telephone | Emergency Contact Name & Phone |
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Retain a copy of this and forward the original to ORTA's Trail Director