



LOSS CONTROL NEWSLETTER

April 2020

Auto-Owners
INSURANCE
LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS

Safe Operation of Pressure Washers

Pressure washers may seem like relatively safe tools – after all, it is just water – but the high pressure from industrial equipment can cause serious injury or even death. Here are some tips on how to safely operate a pressure washer:

- Never point a pressure washer at anyone. Keep your hands, feet and body out of the way of the stream.
- Wear appropriate eye and hearing protection, as well as long pants and closed-toe footwear.
- Use the widest-angle tip and the lowest pressure that will effectively do the job. Narrower angle tips produce higher pressure, which is more dangerous.
- Never leave a pressure washer unattended while the power is on. Set the trigger lock when the wand is not in service to prevent accidental operation.
- Turn off and unplug or lock out the washer whenever you need to make adjustments or repairs.
- Always plug electric pressure washers into a properly grounded outlet with a ground-fault circuit interrupter.
- If you must use an extension cord, only use a cord rated for use in wet locations and keep the cord connection away from water.
- Never exceed the maximum pressure of the lowest-rated washer accessory.

When you are finished using the pressure washer, release the pressure by shutting off the power to the sprayer and continuing to operate the trigger. By following these helpful tips, you can safely and effectively use a pressure washer to complete a variety of projects.

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding workplace safety, please contact your independent insurance agent or the Auto-Owners Loss Control HelpLine at 855.586.5388, or send an email to LossControlSupport@aoins.com.

Any information and recommendations contained in this communication have been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. However, Auto-Owners Insurance Group accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy, sufficiency, or completeness of such information. Additional safety and health procedures may be required to comply with local, state, or federal law. Content in this document is not legal advice, nor does it amend the terms, conditions, or coverages of any insurance policy issued by Auto-Owners Insurance Group. Copyright © 2020 BLR® - Business & Legal Resources. All rights reserved.



Portable Generator Use

During a power outage, portable generators can keep essential functions of a worksite running. But there are hazards that can cause life-threatening injuries unless you use and work around them safely.

Carbon monoxide exhaust from a generator is especially dangerous because it can go unnoticed until it is too late. Constant ventilation is vital. Never use a generator indoors or in an enclosed space like a garage or basement, and do not place it near doors, windows or vents near occupied spaces.

The electricity created by generators has the same electrocution hazards as normal utility-supplied electricity, with an added danger when generator users bypass the safety devices that are built into electrical systems. Only a qualified electrician should be allowed to attach a generator directly to the electrical system of a structure with a transfer switch. Always plug electrical appliances directly into the generator using the manufacturer-supplied cords, or extension cords that are grounded and rated for the equipment they will power.

To prevent fires, when you refuel the generator, always shut it down and allow it to cool first. Store generator fuel in approved containers and keep containers away from fire hazards.

To minimize the risk of hearing loss from the loud noise and vibration of a generator, keep it as far away as possible from areas where people work and congregate. If you work close to a generator, wear hearing protection.



Prevent Mold – Prevent Moisture

Mold is a potential problem in buildings and enclosed worksites wherever there is moisture. Mold destroys furnishings and building materials, and can affect the health of people in the building who come into contact with mold spores.

Common sources of indoor moisture that promote the growth of mold include flooding, roof and plumbing leaks, bathroom showers, humidification units, damp basements, steam from cooking, and condensation on indoor surfaces.

In addition to moisture, mold also needs a food source to grow. Likely sources in the workplace, as well as at home, include drywall, wood, carpets and ceiling tiles.

To eliminate indoor mold growth, control moisture. Measures to prevent mold growth include:

- Dry out an area thoroughly within 24 to 48 hours after it gets wet or damp.
- Fix plumbing leaks and other problems as soon as possible, and dry the area thoroughly with wet vacuums and high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuums.
- Scrub mold off hard surfaces with ammonia-free detergent, disinfectant and water, and dry them completely.
- When in doubt, take it out – put discarded materials like wallboard, insulation and carpeting in a sealed plastic bag.
- When cleaning an area with mold, wear a N95 respirator, nonporous gloves and protective eyewear to avoid inhalation and contact with mold spores.