



SAFETY SHARE

May 12, 2016

Blowers (a.k.a. Billy Goats)

Powered air blowers are used in almost every paving, patch and sealing job. Although blowers may seem to be relatively harmless, they can be dangerous if not used properly and the proper protective equipment is not worn when operating the machine.

These units are designed to propel dirt, small rocks and other debris at high speeds from the area being cleaned. This poses a potentially high risk of someone getting dust/dirt particles in their eye or getting hit by flying debris that can cause injury. Additionally, the dust that is being generated by the blowing activity can and usually does contain hazardous materials such as silica, potentially toxic materials, and certainly contains potentially harmful bacteria and allergens.

This is why the following tips need to be remembered when operating a blower (Billy Goat):

Always wear hearing protection when using the blower. The noise level is way above 95 decibels. Levels this high or higher can cause hearing loss over time.

Always wear a dust mask when using the blower as this can lessen the amount of dust and bacteria that you breathe.

Never point the blower nozzle at anyone, including yourself. Some people try to cool off by turning the blower on themselves. You risk injury if you do this.

Blower engine pull start mechanisms need to be attached all the time. Exposed spinning shafts can catch clothing, hands or other loose materials and cause severe injury.

Always use two men or some type of mechanized method to load and unload the blower from the truck bed in order to lessen the chance of a sprained back.

Safety glasses should to be worn when blowing to lessen the chance of eye injury. Avoid the dust generated by the blower where possible.

Be careful when blowing around vehicles and buildings as debris thrown by the blower can cause damage that you or your organization would then be responsible for.

Remember: Hearing Protection; Safety Glasses; Dust Masks when using the blower.

