

Powerful Safety Tips

Tips From The Pros: Storm Clean-Up Safety

by Joe Sherinski, Master Gardener (NAPSA)—It seems safe to say, knowing what to do before, during and after a storm can help protect your family and your home.

Be Prepared

Create a three-day disaster supply kit stocked with enough food, water, clothing, medicine and first aid supplies for everyone in your family. Have an evacuation plan ready in case local authorities order one.

Check for dead tree limbs and remove them. Pruning your trees will let wind pass through more easily, decreasing the chance of breakage. If the job is complicated or requires aboveground work, contact a certified arborist.

When a Storm Strikes

Stay inside and away from windows during a storm. Use flashlights equipped with fresh batteries rather than candles during outages. Remain alert for the duration of the storm since the greatest damage can occur as winds attack already weakened structures and trees.

When a Storm Clears

Safety is vital in storm clean-up whether you're working to clear streets, yards or driveways. Watch out for downed power lines, and contact the power company immediately if you see them.

Always use proper starting techniques on power equipment. Never drop start a chain saw, overreach or work overhead. Routinely review the owner's manual. If purchasing new power



Practicing outdoor power equipment safety is a vital part of storm clean-up.

equipment, visit a servicing dealer who can assemble your equipment and give you specific operating instructions.

Always wear personal protective equipment. With chain saws and other cutting tools, use eye and ear protection, wear long sleeves, pants, gloves, a helmet, protective chaps and boots rated for use with power equipment.

For more information on outdoor power equipment safety, visit Stihl Incorporated's Web site at www.stihlusa.com.

• *Joe Sherinski, a highly respected horticulturist and spokesperson for Stihl Incorporated, is host of GardenPower, a gardening vignette series broadcast in 30 markets throughout the country.*