

Your Yard

Snowblower Safety Is No Accident

(NAPSA)—So your snowblower won't throw you, now is the time to check it over and review operating procedures to help make this winter chore go smoothly.

Engineers at Briggs & Stratton Corporation, one of the largest makers of gas-powered engines for outdoor power equipment, advise consumers to perform basic snowblower maintenance before the first snowflakes appear. "This is also a good time to review the entire owner's manual, including the safety information, so you can avoid injuries," adds Brian Olsson, an engineer at the company.

According to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission, last year, consumers suffered more than 6,000 snowblower injuries. Most snowblower injuries are caused by reaching into the discharge chute or the auger/collector to remove a clog. When heavy, wet snow or other debris clogs the blower, shut off the machine and remove the obstruction with a stick, never your hand.

Here are some additional safety tips:

- Clearly mark the boundaries of the area you will be snowblowing long before the snow starts to fall.

- Inspect the area where you will be using the snowblower and pick up toys, debris and other objects that could clog the discharge chute or be hurled along with the snow.

- Keep your hands and feet away from all moving parts of the snowblower.

- Never leave the snowblower unattended while it is running.

- Add fuel to the snowblower



GET THAT SNOWBLOWER READY!

outside, before you start it. Never add fuel while the snowblower is running or the engine is hot.

- Warm up the snowblower outside, never in your garage or other enclosed environment.

Briggs & Stratton engineers also recommend regular engine maintenance—an annual tune-up can be performed at an outdoor equipment dealership or by following the directions in the owner's manual.

"The most common reason a snowblower doesn't start is the quality of the gasoline," explains Olsson. "Always start with fresh gasoline and add a fuel stabilizer. Gasoline is formulated differently in winter to aid in cold weather starting, so don't use leftover summer fuel in your snowblower."

Also check the engine's oil level, and refer to the owner's manual to check and adjust the clutch, if needed. Spraying the inside of the snowblower's discharge chute with a silicon spray before each use can help prevent the snow from sticking.

For more information on snowblowers and their proper operation, visit www.BriggsandStratton.com.