



## Organizational and Safety Solutions

### *Snow Thrower Safety*

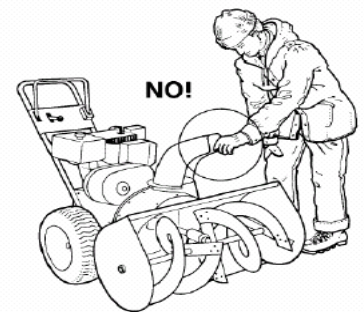
#### Background

In 2013, nationally, there were over 900 (National Electronic Injury Surveillance System) finger amputations involving snow throwers. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that each year, on average, there are approximately 5,740 hospital emergency room-related injuries associated with snow throwers. CPSC has received reports of 19 deaths since 1992 involving snow throwers. Two people died after becoming caught in the machine and five deaths were caused by carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from leaving the engine running in an enclosed area.

#### Hazards and Tips

The single most hazardous activity associated with the use of the snow thrower is manually unclogging the discharge chute or auger/collector. The following tips can help prevent snow thrower injuries:

- ◆ Give all equipment a thorough check before bad weather hits. Make sure all guards are in place. Perform needed preventive maintenance, including changing spark plugs;
- ◆ Always keep hands and feet away from all moving parts;
- ◆ Turn off the engine and use a long stick to unclog wet snow and debris from the machine. Do not use your hands to unclog a snow thrower!
- ◆ Never leave the machine running in an enclosed area, or unattended in any location;



- ◆ Add fuel to the tank outdoors before starting the machine; do not add gasoline to a running or hot engine. Always keep the gasoline can capped and store gasoline outside of residential dwellings and away from ignition sources;
- ◆ If you have an electric-powered snow thrower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times. Check cord prior to use for any damage. Make sure you use a grounded extension cord of a rating recommended by the manufacturer of the snow thrower;
- ◆ Plug electric snow throwers into a GFCI for additional shock protection;
- ◆ Caution employees using snow throwers to be aware of pedestrians who could be struck by the discharge;
- ◆ Make sure that all employees are clear on these practices. Conduct a “tool box talk” on the subject if inclement weather threatens, and remind all employees throughout the snow emergency.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact your local PMA Risk Control Consultant.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** - *The information and suggestions presented by PMA Companies in this risk control technical bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related or other laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter the information and suggestions to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.*