

Learn the 3-minute equipment check

Weekly peeks

Save time at the end of the work week to check these systems:

- ▶ Remove the engine shrouding and clean out the cylinder cooling fins. Dirty cylinder fins will hamper a unit's ability to cool itself and can reduce engine life or even cause seizures, because heat won't dissipate as well from the unit.
- ▶ Check the grease in the gear head to make sure it's at the proper level. If necessary, add grease until it reaches the level recommended by the manufacturer.
- ▶ On trimmers, inspect the starter rope for frays.
- ▶ Remove spark plugs; clean and replace if necessary.
- ▶ Check the fuel lines for cuts, deterioration, other damage.
- ▶ Remove the fuel filter and inspect it for any physical breaks or cracks and replace the filter according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- ▶ Use a tachometer and check the engine's RPM at idle and at wide-open throttle. When checking your unit at wide-open throttle, refer to the manufacturer's guidelines to determine if these should be done with the line extended, or if so, with the recommended line size.
- ▶ If the unit features anti-vibration systems, check the rubber or spring mounts to make sure they're secure and free of cracks.
- ▶ On trimmers, inspect the string head and the bump knob. Check the knob and the eyelets for wear. Also, inspect the spool and housing for breaks or cracks. Never use a string head or blade with a visible crack or break.

M.M.

It's easy to talk about ergonomically sound equipment selection and maintenance and quite another to find the time to manage the process.

by MARK MICHAELS

Attention to basic service will keep your equipment and crew running at peak efficiencies during the busy season. Whether you have a well-

staffed service department or a do-it-yourself approach, there are a few ongoing preventive maintenance tips that will get you through the summer.

Take time to look over and adjust your equipment, to prevent lost work time. Remember that even the simplest piece of equipment needs some fundamental maintenance which can be accomplished in less than three minutes.

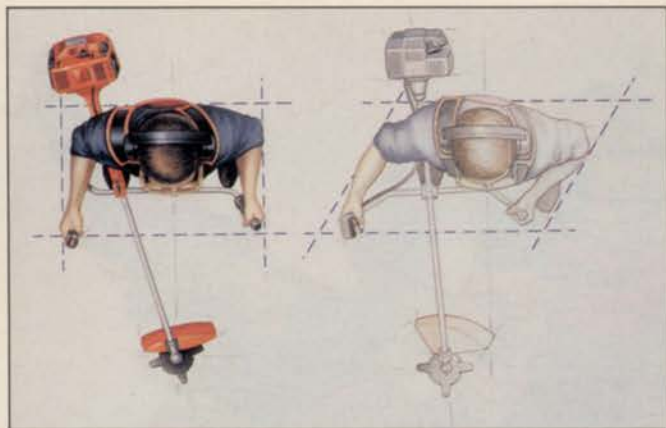
Even how you treat your equipment when it's not in use can contribute to wear and tear.

"This type of equipment doesn't require a lot of mainte-



With regular equipment checks, the operator saves time, and the company saves money.

PHOTO COURTESY HUSQVARNA.



With the trimmer shaft mounted at seven degrees to the left, the cutting head automatically rests in front of the user, for comfortable working position.

nance," says Bruce Wilson, president of Environmental Care Inc., Calabasas, Calif. "A key issue for us is how equipment is transported on our trucks. If trucks and trailers are well-designed, the equipment isn't piled on other equipment, and debris

bags aren't piled on equipment.

"Significant damage can occur when equipment is in transit," says Wilson. **LM**

—The author is senior forestry product manager for Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co.

The daily check list

- ▶ Clean the air filter.
- ▶ Inspect the engine shrouding for any problems that could interfere with the flow of cooling air.
- ▶ Check the air filter cover and air filter box for any broken or missing pieces that would allow unfiltered air to enter the engine and cause damage.
- ▶ Do a complete check over the unit and tighten any hardware that may have come loose the day before.
- ▶ Blow debris off the housing around the engine. Inspect for grass and debris between the gear housing and string head. Neglect here can create heat that may possibly cause loss of power and damage the gear box or cutter head.
- ▶ On trimmers, check the string guard for any broken or missing parts. Many users risk damaging the trimmer when they take off the string guards. Not only is this a safety concern for the user, but a unit without a shield can allow too much line out and may overload an engine not designed for such a heavy load.
- ▶ Lastly, inspect the throttle and operating controls for proper operation and visually inspect the shaft for damage or cracks.

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