Job tasks change seasonally for a landscaper, but power and hand tools and exposure to bugs and the elements last all year long. Know safe work practices to avoid cuts, punctures and amputations. Protect yourself from critters, sun, heat, and cold that you encounter outdoors.

Cuts, punctures, and amputations are common injuries for landscapers. Power equipment like mowers, blowers, trimmers, cutting blades, trenchers, and tillers have rotating and cutting parts that can cause these severe injuries. Read instructions and get training on each specific model of equipment you use. Keep your hands, feet, hair, jewelry, and clothing away from moving parts.

Before you clear jams or perform maintenance, turn power equipment off and secure the power source. Wait for moving parts to stop completely before you put your hands in the equipment. Inspect equipment before each use; ensure that guards and safety switches work properly; never bypass these features.

Hand tools can also cause injuries. Keep them sharp and inspect before each use. Use the right tool for the job. Watch where you are cutting and know where both hands are before you apply pressure to tools. To reduce ergonomic injuries, choose a tool that fits your hand properly and allows you to work with a firm and straight grip. Cut plant materials to small, manageable sizes. Use proper lifting techniques when you move debris. Rotate your tasks throughout the day and take short breaks every 30 minutes to avoid fatigue.

Use personal protective equipment (PPE) and proper clothing on the job. Sturdy work boots protect your feet from heavy equipment, cutting blades, and dropped landscape materials. Gloves protect your hands from blisters, splinters, scratches, cuts, and punctures from tools, rough landscaping materials, and plants. Safety glasses and/or face shields that are impact resistant protect your eyes from flying objects and chemicals. Use UV protective lenses outdoors. Ear plugs or ear muffs protect your hearing from loud equipment. Wear chaps when using a chain saw.

Clothing in a high-visibility color makes you more visible to traffic in roads, parking lots, and your coworkers. Make sure that your landscaping vehicles have back-up alarms when you move around the worksite. Always wear your seatbelt while driving and ensure that passengers (if they are allowed and there is a designated seat) wear their seat belts as well.

Long sleeved shirts and long pants protect your arms and legs from scratches, the sun, and bugs and snakes. Know the first aid for bug and snake bites, watch these areas for infection, and get follow-up medical care when needed. Wear a wide brim hat that covers your ears and protects your nose and neck from the sun and bugs. Apply insect repellant and sunscreen to exposed areas of skin; you may need to re-apply through the day, so follow package directions.

Layers of clothing help you regulate heat and cold exposure as seasons and conditions change. Lightweight, light-colored clothing repels heat while moisture-proof thermal clothing can insulate your
body heat during the cold season. Get training in heat and cold stress in order to recognize the signs and symptoms. Stay hydrated and eat properly for hot and cold environments – small, light meals in heat; warm, hearty meals in cold. Get proper rest, maintain your health, and gradually acclimate your body to handle extreme temperatures.