I am a New Customer, What Chain Do I Have?

Saw chain and guide bars have identification marks on them, and unless they are extremely worn out, they explain what type of chain is on your saw. Look for any numbers and letters on the drive links. That will often tell you what pitch and gauge you’re running. Also, look for any combination of numbers stamped on the guide bar. The chain must match the guide bar to work properly. Finally, count the number of drive links on your chain loop. If you don’t have a bar and chain for your saw, just get the chainsaw manufacturer and model and we can help you from there.

Saw Chain Manufacturers

There are only three major saw chain manufacturers in the world as of 2012. Carlton, Oregon and Stihl. We carry saw chains from all of these major manufacturers, and all are made in ISO 9001 factories in the U.S., China, Canada, Brazil and Switzerland. Box stores are starting to bring saw chain in from other small manufacturers in China, but quality standards vary greatly, and safety is a concern with chain breakage.

Saw Chain Measurements

Although there are over 100 different styles, saw chain has only two distinct measurements, pitch and gauge.

**Pitch** is the overall size of the chain. We measure pitch as the distance between drive links divided by 2. The pitch of the chain must match the pitch of the drive sprocket and guide bar tip. Common saw chain pitch sizes are .325”, .375”, and .404”. Sometimes .375” is referred to as a fraction (3/8” pitch) and the low profile version is referred to as “Picco.”

**Gauge** is the thickness of the drive link. It is determined by measuring the portion of the drive link that fits into the groove of the guide bar. Common saw chain gauge sizes are .043” (1.1mm), .050” (1.3mm), .058” (1.5mm), and .063” (1.6mm).
Welcomes You to Saw Chain 101!

Saw Chain Cutter Types

Saw chain is made with several different cutter types for different cutting environments. Here, we have broken this down into four basic styles, although there are slight variations available for each.

Low Profile cutters have a round radius edge and round grind profile. This is a common cutter style on small consumer and arborist saws. Low profile chain is simple to file or grind and is also known as “Picco.”

Semi-Chisel cutters have a round radius edge and round grind profile. Semi-chisel chain cuts slower than chisel chains, but will stay sharper longer in abrasive cutting conditions. It is simple to file or grind. Semi-chisel is also known as “Picco.”

Square Chisel cutters have a square radius edge and square grind profile. Fastest cutting saw chain, but dulls quickly in abrasive cutting conditions. Difficult to file. Usually maintained on a chisel chain grinder.

Chisel chain is also known as flat top or round chisel. Cutters have a square radius edge and round grind profile. Cuts faster than semi-chisel, but dulls quickly in abrasive cutting conditions. Simple to file or grind.

Skiptooth to Your Cutting Conditions

Skiptooth is a cross between standard and skip sequence. This specialty chain is capable of kickback that the chain saw user experiences “kickback”, which is the sudden upward thrust of the chainsaw bar tip when contacted. Certain types of saw chain are more prone to ‘kickback’ than others, and manufacturers have set up a simple color coordinated identification system (known as ANSI B175.1) to let the user know which saw chains are more and less susceptible to kickback. In general, all green labeled saw chain is ANSI approved as a low kickback chainsaw chain and all yellow labeled saw chain is not. Bailey’s recommends the use of green labeled saw chain whenever possible. Yellow labeled saw chain is for professional use only. These are the actual warning labels from Oregon saw chain.

Important Safety Information

Chainsaws can be incredibly dangerous tools. Each year there are over 40,000 chainsaw related injuries in the U.S. alone. Many of these injuries occur when the chain saw user experiences “kickback”, which is the sudden upward thrust of the chainsaw bar tip when contacted. Certain types of saw chain are more prone to ‘kickback’ than others, and manufacturers have set up a simple color coordinated identification system (known as ANSI B175.1) to let the user know which saw chains are more and less susceptible to kickback. In general, all green labeled saw chain is ANSI approved as a low kickback chainsaw chain and all yellow labeled saw chain is not. Bailey’s recommends the use of green labeled saw chain whenever possible. Yellow labeled saw chain is for professional use only. These are the actual warning labels from Oregon saw chain.

Saw Chain Sequence

Saw chain is available in three different sequences to match your cutting conditions. Standard also known as full-compliment or “full-comp.” Most saw chain is made this way. This type of saw chain is common on all guide bars up to 24” long. “Full-comp” chain cuts fast and smooth.

Semi-Skip is a cross between standard and skip sequence. This specialty chain is used mainly by professional cutters who want the slight benefits of each sequence. Semi-skip chain is only available in square chisel cutter types.

Skiptooth is also known as full skip. This chain is usually used on bars of 24” and longer. This chain has the advantage of better chip clearance in long cuts and quicker sharpening time (less cutters). It has the disadvantage of being prone to vibration, and the lack of cutter teeth make it “grabby” in smaller cuts.

Yellow Label Chain Does NOT Comply with the Low-Kickback Requirements of the Standard.

ATTENTION: READ THIS WARNING

This saw chain may be capable of kickback that could result in serious injury to the chainsaw operator or bystanders. DO NOT USE THIS SAW CHAIN UNLESS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE AND SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR DEALING WITH KICKBACK. Saw chain with reduced kickback potential is available.

Green-Label Chain is Low-Kickback Chain.

ATTENTION: READ THIS WARNING

The sawchain in this package is low kickback chain. It met with the reduced kickback requirements of ANSI B175.1 when tested on a representative sample of chainsaws. Its safety features significantly reduce the hazard of kickback while maintaining high cutting performance. ALL CUTTING CHAINS CAN KICKBACK, which may result in severe personal injury to the chainsaw operator or bystanders. Operate your chainsaw safely. Read all warnings in your chainsaw operator’s manual.

See Page 16 for More Information on How To: Match Your Cutter Type to Your Cutting Conditions