

STIHL®

STIHL FS 38

Instruction Manual
Manual de instrucciones



WARNING

Read and follow all safety precautions in Instruction Manual – improper use can cause serious or fatal injury.

ADVERTENCIA

Lea y siga todas las precauciones de seguridad dadas en el manual de instrucciones – el uso incorrecto puede causar lesiones graves o mortales.



Instruction Manual

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Allow only persons who fully understand this manual to operate your trimmer.

To receive maximum performance and satisfaction from your STIHL trimmer, it is important that you read, understand and follow the safety precautions and the operating and maintenance instructions in chapter "Safety Precautions and Working Techniques" before using your trimmer. For further information you can go to www.stihlusa.com.

Contact your STIHL dealer or the STIHL distributor for your area if you do not understand any of the instructions in this manual.

WARNING

Because a trimmer is a high-speed cutting tool some special safety precautions must be observed to reduce the risk of personal injury. Careless or improper use may cause serious or even fatal injury.

Make sure your unit is equipped with the proper deflector, handle and harness for the type of cutting attachment being used. Always wear proper eye protection.

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Guide to Using this Manual

Pictograms

The meanings of the pictograms attached to or embossed on the machine are explained in this manual.

Depending on the model concerned, the following pictograms may be on your machine.



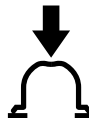
Fuel tank for gasoline and engine oil mixture



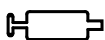
Press to operate decompression valve



Manual fuel pump



Press to operate manual fuel pump



Filler hole for gear lubricant



Air intake summer mode



Air intake winter mode



Handle heating

Symbols in Text

Many operating and safety instructions are supported by illustrations.

The individual steps or procedures described in the manual may be marked in different ways:

- A bullet marks a step or procedure.

A description of a step or procedure that refers directly to an illustration may contain item numbers that appear in the illustration. Example:

- Loosen the screw (1).
- Lever (2) ...

In addition to the operating instructions, this manual may contain paragraphs that require your special attention. Such paragraphs are marked with the symbols and signal words described below:



DANGER

Indicates an imminent risk of severe or fatal injury.



WARNING

Indicates a hazardous situation which, if not avoided, could result in severe or fatal injury.

NOTICE

Indicates a risk of property damage, including damage to the machine or its individual components.

Engineering Improvements

STIHL's philosophy is to continually improve all of its products. As a result, engineering changes and improvements are made from time to time. Therefore, some changes, modifications and improvements may not be covered in this manual. If the operating characteristics or the appearance of your machine differs from those described in this manual, please contact your STIHL dealer for assistance.

Safety Precautions and Working Techniques



Because a trimmer is a high-speed, fast-cutting power tool, special safety precautions must be observed to reduce the risk of personal injury.



It is important that you read, fully understand and observe the following safety precautions and warnings. Read the instruction manual and the safety precautions periodically. Careless or improper use may cause serious or fatal injury.



The terminology utilized in this manual when referring to the power tool reflects the type of cutting attachments that may be mounted on it. The term "trimmer" is used to designate an FS unit that is equipped with a nylon line head or a head with flexible plastic blades (i.e., the PolyCut head.) FS models with an "R" on the nameplate were originally configured (at the time of distribution) as a trimmer with a loop handle.



As more fully explained later in these Safety Precautions, to reduce the risk of personal injury, make sure your unit is equipped with the proper handle, harness and deflector for the type of

cutting attachment you are using. Use only cutting attachments that are specifically authorized by STIHL for use on your FS model. To reduce the risk of severe or fatal injury from blade contact and / or loss of control, never attempt to use a metal blade on this trimmer.

Have your STIHL dealer show you how to operate your power tool. Observe all applicable local safety regulations, standards and ordinances.



Do not lend or rent your power tool without the instruction manual. Be sure that anyone using it understands the information contained in this manual.



The use of this machine may be hazardous. If the rotating line or blade comes in contact with your body, it will cut you. When it comes in contact with solid foreign objects such as rocks or bits of metal, it may fling them directly or by ricochet in the direction of bystanders or the operator. Striking such objects could damage the cutting attachment. Thrown objects, including broken heads or polymer blades, may result in serious or fatal injury to the operator or bystanders.

Use your trimmer equipped with the appropriate cutting attachment only for cutting grass and similar material.



Do not use it for other purposes, since misuse may result in personal injury or property damage, including damage to the machine.



Minors should never be allowed to use this power tool. Bystanders, especially children, and animals should not be allowed in the area where it is in use.



To reduce the risk of injury to bystanders and damage to property, never let your power tool run unattended. When it is not in use (e.g. during a work break), shut it off and make sure that unauthorized persons do not use it.

Most of these safety precautions and warnings apply to the use of all STIHL trimmers. Different models may have different parts and controls. See the appropriate section of your instruction manual for a description of the controls and the function of the parts of your model.

Safe use of a trimmer involves

1. the operator
2. the power tool
3. the use of the power tool

THE OPERATOR

Physical Condition

You must be in good physical condition and mental health and not under the influence of any substance (drugs, alcohol, etc.) which might impair vision, dexterity or judgment. Do not operate this machine when you are fatigued.

! WARNING

Be alert – if you get tired, take a break. Tiredness may result in loss of control. Working with any power tool can be strenuous. If you have any condition that might be aggravated by strenuous work, check with your doctor before operating this machine.

! WARNING

Prolonged use of a power tool (or other machines) exposing the operator to vibrations may produce whitefinger disease (Raynaud's phenomenon) or carpal tunnel syndrome.

These conditions reduce the hand's ability to feel and regulate temperature, produce numbness and burning sensations and may cause nerve and circulation damage and tissue necrosis.

All factors which contribute to whitefinger disease are not known, but cold weather, smoking and diseases or physical conditions that affect blood vessels and blood transport, as well as high vibration levels and long periods of exposure to vibration are mentioned as factors in the development of whitefinger disease. In order to reduce the risk of whitefinger disease and carpal tunnel syndrome, please note the following:

Most STIHL power tools are available with an anti-vibration ("AV") system designed to reduce the transmission of vibrations created by the machine to the operator's hands. An AV system is recommended for those persons using power tools on a regular or sustained basis.

- Wear gloves and keep your hands warm.
- Keep the AV system well maintained. A power tool with loose components or with damaged or worn AV elements will tend to have higher vibration levels.
- Maintain a firm grip at all times, but do not squeeze the handles with constant, excessive pressure. Take frequent breaks.

All the above-mentioned precautions do not guarantee that you will not sustain whitefinger disease or carpal tunnel syndrome. Therefore, continual and regular users should closely monitor the condition of their hands and fingers. If any of the above symptoms appear, seek medical advice immediately.

! WARNING

The ignition system of the STIHL unit produces an electromagnetic field of a very low intensity. This field may interfere with some pacemakers. To reduce the risk of serious or fatal injury, persons with a pacemaker should consult their physician and the pacemaker manufacturer before operating this tool.

Proper Clothing

! WARNING

To reduce the risk of injury, the operator should wear proper protective apparel.

! WARNING

The deflector provided with your power tool will not protect the operator from all foreign objects (gravel, glass, wire, etc.) thrown back by the rotating cutting attachment. Thrown objects may also ricochet and strike the operator.

! WARNING



To reduce the risk of injury to your eyes never operate your power tool unless wearing goggles or properly fitted protective glasses with adequate top and side protection complying with ANSI Z 87.1 (or your applicable national standard.) To reduce the risk of injury to your face STIHL recommends that you also wear a face shield or face screen over your goggles or protective glasses.

Power tool noise may damage your hearing. Wear sound barriers (ear plugs or ear muffers) to protect your hearing. Continual and regular users should have their hearing checked regularly.

Be particularly alert and cautious when wearing hearing protection because your ability to hear warnings (shouts, alarms, etc.) is restricted.



Always wear gloves when handling the machine and metal blades. Heavy-duty, non-slip gloves improve your grip and help to protect your hands.



Clothing must be sturdy and snug-fitting, but allow complete freedom of movement. Wear long pants made of heavy material to help protect your legs. Do not wear shorts, sandals or go barefoot.



Avoid loose-fitting jackets, scarfs, neckties, jewelry, flared or cuffed pants, unconfined long hair or anything that could become caught on branches, brush or the moving parts of the unit. Secure hair so it is above shoulder level.



Good footing is very important. Wear sturdy boots with nonslip soles. Steel-toed safety boots are recommended.

THE POWER TOOL

For illustrations and definitions of the power tool parts see the chapter on "Main Parts."

WARNING

Never modify this power tool in any way. Only attachments supplied by STIHL and expressly approved by STIHL for use with the specific STIHL model are authorized. Although certain unauthorized attachments are useable with STIHL power tools, their use may, in fact, be extremely dangerous. For the cutting attachments authorized by STIHL for your unit, see the chapter "Approved Combinations of Cutting Attachment, Deflector, Handle and Harness" in the instruction manual or the STIHL "Cutting Attachments, Parts & Accessories" catalog.

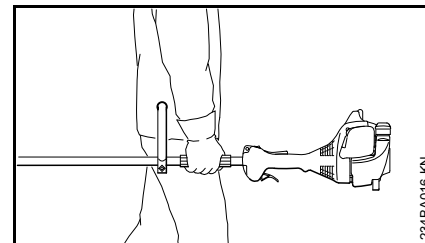
If this tool is subjected to unusually high loads for which it was not designed (e.g. heavy impact or a fall), always check that it is in good condition before continuing work. Check in particular that the fuel system is tight (no leaks) and that the controls and safety devices are working properly. Do not continue operating this machine if it is damaged. In case of doubt, have it checked by your STIHL servicing dealer.

THE USE OF THE POWER TOOL

Transporting the Power Tool

WARNING

To reduce the risk of injury from loss of control and line contact, never carry or transport your power tool with the cutting attachment moving.



It may be carried only in a horizontal position. Grip the shaft in a manner that the machine is balanced horizontally. Keep the hot muffler away from your body and the cutting attachment behind you.

WARNING

Always shut off the engine and make sure the cutting attachment has stopped before putting a trimmer down. When transporting it in a vehicle, properly secure it to prevent turnover, fuel spillage and damage to the unit.

Fuel

Your STIHL power tool uses an oil-gasoline mixture for fuel (see the chapter on "Fuel" of your instruction manual.)

! WARNING



Gasoline is an extremely flammable fuel. If spilled and ignited by a spark or other ignition source, it can cause fire and serious burn injury or property damage. Use extreme caution when handling gasoline or fuel mix. Do not smoke or bring any fire or flame near the fuel or the power tool. Note that combustible fuel vapor may escape from the fuel system.

Fueling Instructions

! WARNING

To reduce the risk of serious injury from burns, never attempt to refuel the unit until it has been completely removed from the operator.

! WARNING

Fuel your power tool in well-ventilated areas, outdoors. Always shut off the engine and allow it to cool before refueling. Gasoline vapor pressure may build up inside the fuel tank depending on the fuel used, the weather conditions and the tank venting system.

In order to reduce the risk of burns and other personal injury from escaping gas vapor and fumes, remove the fuel filler cap on your power tool carefully so as to allow any pressure build-up in the tank to release slowly. Never remove the fuel filler cap while the engine is running.

Select bare ground for fueling and move at least 10 feet (3 m) from the fueling spot before starting the engine. Wipe off any spilled fuel before starting your machine.

! WARNING



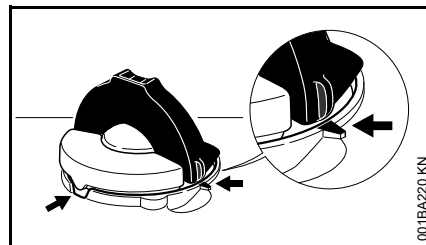
Check for fuel leakage while refueling and during operation. If fuel leakage is found, do not start or run the engine until the leak is fixed and any spilled fuel has been wiped away. Take care not to get fuel on your clothing. If this happens, change your clothing immediately.

! WARNING

In order to reduce the risk of fuel spillage and fire from an improperly tightened fuel cap, correctly position and tighten the fuel cap in the fuel tank opening.

Different models may be equipped with different fuel caps.

Toolless cap with grip



To do this with this STIHL cap, raise the grip on the top of the cap until it is upright at a 90° angle. Insert the cap in the fuel

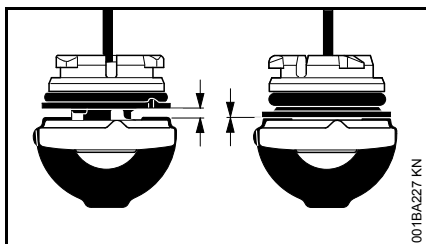
tank opening with the raised positioning marks on the grip of the cap and on the fuel tank opening lining up. Using the grip, press the cap down firmly while turning it clockwise as far as it will go (approx. 1/4 turn).



Fold the grip flush with the top of the cap. Grip the cap and check for tightness. If the grip does not lie completely flush with the cap and the detent on the grip does not fit in the corresponding recess in the filler opening, or if the cap is loose in the filler opening, the cap is not properly seated and tightened and you must repeat the above steps.

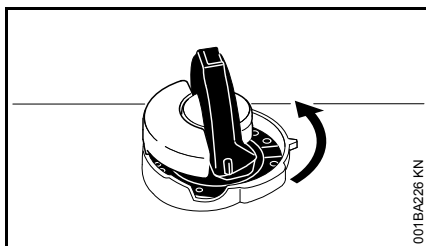
Misaligned, damaged or broken cap

- If the cap does not drop fully into the opening when the positioning marks line up and/or if the cap does not tighten properly when twisted, the base of the cap may be prematurely rotated (in relation to the top) to the closed position. Such misalignment can result from handling, cleaning or an improper attempt at tightening.



001BA227 KN

- Left: Base of cap in closed position (with open space)
- Right: Base of cap correctly positioned for installation



001BA226 KN

- To return the cap to the open position for installation, turn the cap (with the grip up) until it drops fully into the tank opening. Next, twist the cap counterclockwise as far as it will go (approx. 1/4 turn) – this will twist the base of the cap into the correct position. Then, twist the cap clockwise, closing it normally.
- If your cap still does not tighten properly, it may be damaged or broken; immediately stop use of the unit and take it to your authorized STIHL dealer for repair.

Screw Cap

! WARNING



Unit vibrations can cause an improperly tightened fuel filler cap to loosen or come off and spill quantities of fuel. In order to reduce the risk of fuel spillage and fire, tighten the fuel filler cap by hand as securely as possible.

See also the "Fueling" chapter in your Instruction Manual for additional information.

Before Starting

! WARNING

Always check your power tool for proper condition and operation before starting, particularly the throttle trigger, throttle trigger lockout, stop switch, cutting attachment, deflector and harness. The throttle trigger must move freely and always spring back to the idle position. Never attempt to modify the controls or safety devices. Never use a power tool that is damaged or not properly maintained.

! WARNING

Do not attach any cutting attachment to a unit without proper installation of all required parts. Failure to use the proper parts may cause the blade or head to fly off and seriously injure the operator or bystanders.

! WARNING

The cutting attachment must be properly tightened and in safe operating condition. Inspect for loose parts (nuts, screws, etc.) Replace damaged heads before using the power tool.

Keep the handles clean and dry at all times; it is particularly important to keep them free of moisture, pitch, oil, fuel mix, grease or resin in order for you to maintain a firm grip and properly control your power tool.

! WARNING

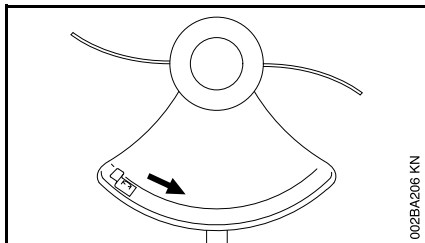
Check that the spark plug boot is securely mounted on the spark plug – a loose boot may cause arcing that could ignite combustible fumes and cause a fire.

! WARNING



To reduce the risk of personal injury to the operator from blade or line contact and thrown objects, make sure your unit is equipped with the proper deflector, handle and harness for the type of cutting attachment being used (see chart in the chapter on "Approved Combinations of Cutting Attachment, Deflector, Handle and Harness".)

Keep the deflector (and the attached skirt where appropriate) adjusted properly at all times (see chapters on "Mounting the Deflector" and "Mounting the Cutting Attachment" of your instruction manual.)



Arrows on the deflector (as seen from the underside) show the correct direction of rotation of the cutting

attachment. When viewed from above, however, the cutting attachment rotates counterclockwise.

Adjust the hand grip and harness (if you are wearing one) to suit your size before starting work. The machine should be properly balanced as specified in your instruction manual for proper control and less fatigue in operation. To be better prepared in case of an emergency, practise releasing the unit from the harness as quickly as possible.

Starting

Start the engine at least 10 feet (3 m) from the fueling spot, outdoors only.

For specific starting instructions, see the appropriate section of your manual. Place the power tool on firm ground or other solid surface in an open area. Maintain good balance and secure footing.

! WARNING

To reduce the risk of injury from blade or line contact, be absolutely sure that the cutting attachment is clear of you and all other obstructions and objects, including the ground, because when the engine starts at starting-throttle, engine speed will be fast enough for the clutch to engage and move the cutting attachment.

Once the engine has started, immediately blip the throttle trigger, which should release the starting throttle and allow the engine to slow down to idle.

With the engine running only at idle, attach the power tool to the spring hook of your harness if you are using one (see appropriate chapter of the instruction manual.)

! WARNING

Your power tool is a one-person machine. Do not allow other persons in the general work area, even when starting.

! WARNING

To reduce the risk of injury from loss of control, do not attempt to "drop start" your power tool.

! WARNING

When you pull the starter grip, do not wrap the starter rope around your hand. Do not let the grip snap back, but guide the starter rope to rewind it properly. Failure to follow this procedure may result in injury to your hand or fingers and may damage the starter mechanism.

Important Adjustments

! WARNING

To reduce the risk of personal injury from loss of control or contact with the running cutting attachment, do not use your unit with incorrect idle adjustment. At correct idle speed, the cutting attachment should not move. For directions on how to adjust idle speed, see the appropriate section of your instruction manual.