

Fell small trees using a chainsaw

Overview

This standard is about the felling of small trees using a chainsaw. A small tree is defined as under 380mm (15in) at felling height.

The felling technique will be appropriate to tree size, weight, condition and species of tree and also take into account the terrain and weather conditions.

This standard covers both coniferous and broadleaved trees, trees that are upright, trees that are weighted towards, and those that are weighted against, a given felling direction.

When working with machinery you need to be appropriately trained, and hold current certification where required, in line with relevant legislation.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. assess the risks associated with the site and the proposed work
2. select and implement appropriate working methods, in accordance with the assessed risks
3. select and use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the work
4. maintain the safety and security of equipment on site
5. plan how you will carry out the activity and discuss any concerns with the appropriate person to establish how best the work can be completed
6. prepare the site by removing the obstacles in the felling direction and establish escape route(s), as appropriate
7. prepare the site for felling operations with a chainsaw
8. carry out routine operator maintenance, pre-start checks and the setting of the chainsaw for use
9. prepare small trees for felling in a method appropriate to the condition of the tree and the specification for the site
10. prepare the site to facilitate the take-down of the small tree, and ensure the immediate work area at the base of the tree is clear
11. select a recognised felling method using a chainsaw, appropriate for the site specification, tree size and condition, taking account of the direction in which the tree is weighted and the intended direction of the fall
12. fell small trees, using recognised felling methods and felling aids that are appropriate for the tree form, condition and selected felling technique
13. ensure the position and condition of the felled tree is safe and suitable for subsequent operations
14. follow the environmental good practice set by your organisation and the industry, and minimise environmental damage
15. keep accurate and up-to-date records, as required by relevant legislation and your organisation
16. maintain the health and safety of yourself and others at all times, in accordance with relevant legislation and codes of practice

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how to identify hazards and comply with the control procedures of risk assessments when felling small trees using a chainsaw
2. the emergency planning and procedures relevant to the site
3. the selection, use and care of personal protective equipment (PPE)
4. the importance of minimising environmental damage and preventing pollution incidents
5. how to identify which trees need to be felled using a chainsaw
6. the relevant legal requirements and constraints for felling small trees in different circumstances
7. the implications of terrain, ground conditions, season, weather and tree condition to the felling of small trees
8. the recognised felling methods, including the use of boring cuts and felling aids
9. how to recognise signs of disease and decay in trees and how to modify felling methods accordingly
10. the advantages of setting up or using a natural felling bench, brash mat or similar support prior to felling
11. how and when to use additional equipment to assist with the felling of small trees and the additional safeguards required
12. how to fell small trees stripped of tops and/or branches and the additional safeguards required
13. how to recognise when a small tree is difficult to fell and the action to be taken
14. the additional safeguards to use when felling in the proximity of paths, roads or areas with public access
15. the importance of checking how well you dealt with any problems when felling small trees
16. the current guidelines on safety clearances from overhead electricity conductors and what to do in the event of contact with power lines
17. why it is important to maintain chainsaws to a high standard
18. your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation and guidelines

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Scope/range

Felling methods for:

- upright/balanced small trees
- back-weighted small trees
- forward-weighted small trees
- poles
- difficult to fell small trees (e.g. high commercial value, condition, aspect or position)
- use of guide bars greater than diameter of the tree

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**Scope/range related
to knowledge and
understanding**

Additional equipment:

- lifting tongs
- cant hooks
- turning hooks
- turning straps
- take-down poles
- other appropriate equipment

Glossary

Prepare the site – this could include setting up a bench, brash mat or similar

Prepare small trees for felling – which could include brashing lower branches, removing climbing vegetation, buttresses and other obstructions

Potential impacts on the environment – such as red squirrel drays, badger sets, bat colonies

Tree positions – standing straight, leaning against and leaning in the intended felling direction

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