

FROM THE ISAO SAFETY COMMITTEE: Felling trees

Felling trees is an essential task, but it poses a significant risk to workers. Whether performed by professionals or amateurs, safety must be the top priority.

DESCRIBE the Hazard

- Falling Objects: A tree or tree part may fail or come loose unpredictably during felling operations, potentially injuring a worker(s) or bystander(s).
- Trapping Hazards: The worker may become trapped between the tree, tree stump and other obstacles during the felling process.
- Kickback: The chainsaw bar may "kickback" causing sudden, violent movements that can lead to loss of control or injury.
- Unstable Terrain: Uneven, sloped, or wet terrain increases the likelihood of slipping, falling or losing balance while cutting.
- Tree Lean/Biomass: A tree's apparent lean may be hard to determine. If proper cutting measures aren't met, the tree could fall unpredictably, endangering worker(s).
- Environmental Conditions: Wind can affect the direction the tree falls, making it difficult to control. Wet conditions can make tools slippery to handle.
- Manual Handling Risks: Carrying equipment, i.e., chainsaw, axe or wedges can strain muscles, leading to potential sprains, or other injuries.

DISCUSS control measures

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Always wear appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses, helmet, gloves, chainsaw protective pants and steeltoed boots.
- Site Assessment: Prior to work commencing be sure to complete a

tailboard/job briefing with your crew. It's crucial to have a safety plan. Before entering the "fall zone," asses the site conditions and potential targets. Make note of hydro wires, buildings, tree height and lean, adjacent trees, pedestrians, and roads/infrastructure. Establish a "hazard zone" (a good reference for this is 1.5 times the height of the tree in all directions).

- Tree Assessment: Once you are in the "fall zone" assess the tree again. Double-check lean, check for decay, fruiting bodies, hollows, and nesting species. Ensure a proper escape route is established (45 degrees opposite the fall) and is clear of debris.
- Safe Cutting Technique: Prior to use, make sure your chain is sharp and put on the bar correctly. Handle the chainsaw properly. Always have two hands on the saw, with your top hand utilizing a firm grip with your thumb wrapped around the handle. Be sure to have proper footing before cutting. Choose the appropriate notch type and depth. Aim the saw in the direction of fall using the sightlines on the chainsaw. Make a face cut (notch) in the direction of the fall. Before the final cut, be sure to always call out "back cut!" to ensure all workers are on the same page. Working in pairs is imperative for everyone's safety! While the tree is falling, put the chain brake on and use your predetermined escape route. Never completely turn your back to the falling tree.

DEMONSTRATE knowledge

- Site and Tree Assessment Skills: Understand how to determine hazards, targets, environmental conditions, lean, biomass and tree species to ensure a comfortable fell.
- Felling Technique: Be proficient in varying cutting techniques

including correct notch and felling cut. Understand how to control the direction the tree falls.

- Emergency Plan: Be trained in how to handle emergencies and rescue procedures. Stay current in first aid/ CPR training.
- Knowledge of Equipment: Understand how to use and maintain chainsaws, including sharpening, tensioning, and lubricating the chain.
- Personal Safety: Know how to use PPE effectively and ensure yourself and all other workers on site are trained and properly equipped for the task.

Date:
Location:
Presenter:
MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY (Each participant is to sign below)
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