



SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT – Chainsaw Operation

WORK ACTIVITY	CHAINSAW: OPERATION			
Qualifications and/or Competencies required	Forestry Commission Accredited Chainsaw Course FWPCOT2237 - Maintain chainsaws CPCWHS1001 - Prepare to work safely in the construction industry	Personal Protective Equipment Required	Mandatory	Safety Helmet, Safety Footwear, Protective Clothing, Eye Protection and mesh Face Shield, Hearing Protection, Chaps Protective Work Gloves
			Others	Leather Work Gloves, High Visibility Clothing
Reference Documents		Plant / Equipment Required		
WorkCover NSW Code of Practice – Amenity Tree Industry AS2726.1 – 2004 Chainsaws – Safety Requirements AS 2727 – 1997 Chainsaws – Guide to Safe Working Practices MSDS sheets for Fuels & Lubricants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chainsaw Chain Sharpening Equipment Depth Gauge 		
ALWAYS REFER TO ADDITIONAL SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TASK / ACTIVITY BEING PERFORMED.				
WORK STEPS	HAZARDS	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?	IDENTIFIED CONTROLS REQUIRED	
Check and Inspect the following	Inoperative chain brake	Rotating chain when chainsaw Started Cuts and abrasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the Chain Brake mechanism operates and clear foreign material 	
	Poorly maintained	Dull chain Worn or burred bar Extra effort required whilst cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the Operator's Manual 	

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before starting: Chain brake Chain Condition Bar Condition Guards Handles Throttle Fuel Leaks	bar/chain		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the sprockets for wear • Ensure chain is lubricated, sharpened and correctly tensioned • Ensure bar is dressed or replaced if necessary
	Sticking throttle	Irregular / erratic chain speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use if occurring and have the saw serviced regularly
	Leaking fuel	Environmental contamination Fire outbreak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for faulty / damaged fuel line, cap, tank or carburettor • Check for correctly fitted fuel / oil cap
Sharpen Chain (if necessary)	Sharp chain links	Cuts & abrasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wear protective work gloves when handling the chain
	Incorrect sharpening	Increase likelihood of kickback Extra effort required whilst cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the chain is sharpened and raker clearance is adjusted in accordance with manufacturer's manual • Ensure correct size files and gauges are used
Add Fuel / Bar oil	Fuel / bar oil spillage	Environmental contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up any spills with approved material / spill kit • Use a funnel and don't completely fill the tank
Inspect the Work Environment	Adverse working conditions	Trips and slips Unpredictable felling directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using a chainsaw in wet, icy, windy conditions or poor light • Avoid starting chainsaw near combustible fuels or in a fire hazard situation • Don't operate in a confined space or other hazardous situation
Plan an Escape Route	Obstructions	Impeded escape path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always ensure there are two escape routes at approximately 45 degrees backward of the chosen line of fall • Check tree tops for branches that may dislodge and fall



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure escape route is free of obstructions
Erect Physical Barriers or Signs (if applicable)	External parties	Contact with other people / animals in close proximity to the worksite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check no children / animals are in the work area • Check no other person is likely to be affected or put at risk
Engage Chain Brake and Start the Chainsaw	Uncontrolled chainsaw movement or operation	Cuts and abrasions Sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference is to always start a chainsaw on firm, level ground where possible • Mesh face shield and eye protection must be worn • “Drop -start” method may be used when working from an EWP or within a tree

WORK STEPS	HAZARDS	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?	IDENTIFIED CONTROLS REQUIRED
Release Chain Brake and check Operation	Inoperative chain brake	Inoperative chain brake Brake fails to operate Cuts and abrasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the Chain Brake mechanism operates correctly
Perform Cutting Operation	Carrying a chainsaw	Cuts and abrasions Fall or trip whilst carrying chainsaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shut off the saw or engage the chain brake before carrying • Carry the saw by the front handle, with the chain bar pointing to the rear • Ensure chain is stationary before moving between cuts • Don't carry a chainsaw on your shoulder



	Eye damage	Dust and debris entering eye Splinters and chips piercing eye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a mesh face guard to deflect flying chips and splinters • Use of eye protection to prevent dust and fines from entering the eyes • Prevention of misting or fogging may be required for by selecting suitable eye wear, ventilation, adequately ventilated eyewear or cleaning materials handy at the worksite
	Weight of the chainsaw	Muscle fatigue Sprains and strains Drop Chainsaw from height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take regular breaks • Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration • Warm up and stretch muscles before operating • Chainsaw shall be anchored to EWP basket or firmly within the tree by appropriate "Tool Strop" when working aloft
	Tip or upper quadrant of the bar nose contacting a log, branch, nail etc	Kick back Serious or fatal injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use low kick back type chains and avoid lowering the depth gauge too much when sharpening the chain • Hold the chainsaw firmly, making sure that the left hand encircles the top handle with the thumb underneath • Don't let the upper quadrant of the guide bar or chain contact what you are cutting or hidden branches • Position your body to the left of the chainsaw, so that if it kicks back uncontrollably it goes over your right shoulder • Keep the work area clear of brush or vegetation • Don't cut above shoulder height • Never hold the saw in one hand or by one handle only when operating • Always begin your cut at peak or full revs • Keep the chain away from dirt or rocks when cutting



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that bar oil is flowing
	Ineffective vibration damping system	Raynaud's disease (white finger) Hand numbness and burning sensation Nerve tissue and circulation damage Persistent pain in neck, shoulders and arms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the chainsaw has anti-vibration mountings that isolate handles from the engine • If possible use a saw with ergonomically angled handles • Take regular rest breaks from continuous operations • Sharpen the chain regularly to ensure smoother cutting and less vibration
	Branch / limb suspended from one end	Jamming Chain pull-in or push-back from pinching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially make a shallow cut on the underside (compression side) of branch / limb • Cut from the topside towards the compression cut • Use a wedge to prevent the compression cut jamming onto the chainsaw bar or chain • Always stand on the up hill side of the log or limb
	Uneven or sloping ground	Over-balancing Trips and slips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the work area is clear of debris or obstructions, and you have a stable footing while cutting • Don't over-reach or work off balance • Stand comfortably close to the job
	Excessive noise	Permanent hearing loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wear approved ear plugs or muffs
	Exhaust gases in enclosed spaces	Carbon monoxide poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the muffler is in good condition • Do not use chainsaw in confined spaces
Field Maintenance	Chain sharpening	Cuts and abrasions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wear protective work gloves when handling the chain • Wait until cool before sharpening the chain



<p>and Refuelling</p>	<p>Hot exhaust / motor</p>	<p>Fire outbreak Burns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never smoke while refuelling or operating a chainsaw • Refuel only after the motor is stopped and has cooled down • Ensure fuel caps are tightly screwed on and any spillage is cleaned off chainsaw • Move at least three metres away from fuel containers before starting the saw • Ensure a fire extinguisher is available
<p>Shutting off Cleaning and Storing the Chainsaw</p>	<p>Hot exhaust and or chain / bar</p>	<p>Cuts and abrasions Burns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait until cool before cleaning, handling and re-fitting bar cover, etc. • Engage the chain brake



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