



Chainsaws at Work	
Reference: FG02	Effective date: 10 April 2019
Page no: 1 of 3	Approved: 20 Jan 2020
Last revision: 19 Dec 19	Next revision due: Jan 2022

General

Petrol driven chainsaws are an extremely useful piece of equipment on a site where there is a great deal of wood that needs to be cut. They can also be potentially dangerous machines if not maintained and used correctly.

Chainsaws may only be used by staff trained to an appropriate level for the task to which they are applied. In most circumstances this is likely to be cross-cutting timber. Tree surgery, other than removing dead or fallen timber at ground level, should be undertaken by a professional.

To limit access to the chainsaw it is stored in a locked cupboard to which only the Facilities Manager has access.

Staff trained in chainsaw work

Staff member	Last training completed	Next training due
Cameron Cheek	April 2019	

This policy is based on information provided by the Health and Safety Executive. Source: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg317.htm>

Fitness to Operate a Chainsaw

Operators need to be reasonably fit, both physically and mentally, if they are to use a chainsaw safely. People with disabilities do not need to be excluded from work with chainsaws, but medical advice may restrict the tasks they can do and require increased supervision. Certain medical conditions may affect the ability of a person to operate a chainsaw safely. Seek further medical advice if prospective operators have any condition affecting, eg their:

- mobility (eg arthritis, stroke);
- alertness (eg diabetes or alcohol/drug dependency);
- physical strength (eg heart conditions);
- vision (which cannot be corrected by glasses or contact lenses);
- manual dexterity/grip strength (eg vibration white finger);
- balance (eg vertigo, giddiness or epilepsy).

Operators need to inform their employers when they are taking prescribed medication which may affect their ability to operate a chainsaw safely.

Health Risks

Chainsaws expose operators to high levels of noise and hand-arm vibration, which can lead to hearing loss and conditions such as vibration white finger. These risks may be controlled by good management practice such as:

- Buying low-noise/low-vibration chainsaws (eg with anti-vibration mounts and heated handles);
- Providing suitable hearing protection;
- Proper maintenance schedules for chainsaws and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Giving information and training to operators on the health risks associated with chainsaws and use of PPE etc.



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Encourage existing chainsaw operators to report any signs or symptoms which may affect their ability to use a chainsaw safely or may indicate adverse health effects from noise and/or vibration. Employers are required to carry out health surveillance of their employees where they cannot reduce noise or hand-arm vibration exposure to safe levels.

Training provision

Training needs to be carried out by suitably qualified instructors. External sources that may be able to provide appropriate training include independent training providers, instructors and colleges. Currently training has been provided by a LANTRA accredited instructor from <http://www.treeschool.co.uk>

All chainsaw operators should do regular refresher/update training to ensure they work to industry best practice and maintain their levels of competence. For the occasional user at the farm three years is suggested.

Maintaining a chainsaw

Proper maintenance is essential if a chainsaw is to be safe to use and will provide protection against ill health from excessive noise and vibration. Maintain the saw in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations with all the safety devices in efficient working order and all guards in place. It will need to be regularly serviced by someone who is competent to do so.

Operators need to be trained in the correct chain-sharpening techniques and chain and guide bar maintenance to keep the saw in safe working condition. Operators need to report any damage or excessive wear from daily checks on the following:

- on/off switch;
- chain brake;
- chain catcher;
- silencer;
- guide bar, drive sprocket and chain links;
- side plate, front and rear hand guards;
- anti-vibration mounts;
- starting cord for correct tension.

Personal Protective Equipment

The use of the following PPE is mandatory while using a chainsaw.

Safety helmet to EN 397. It is recommended that arborists working from a rope and harness use a mountaineering style helmet.

Hearing protection to EN 352-1.

Eye protection: Mesh visors to EN 1731 or safety glasses to EN 166.

Upper body protection: Due to the low risk cross-cutting at floor level across the farm. Upper body protection is not necessary. Although any staff member can request new upper body PPE at any point.

Gloves: The use of appropriate gloves is recommended under most circumstances. The type of glove will depend on a risk assessment of the task and machine. Consider the need for protection from cuts from the chainsaw, thorny material and cold/wet conditions. Where chainsaw gloves are required these need to be to EN 381-7.



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Leg protection to EN 381-5. (All-round protection is recommended for arborists working in trees and occasional users, such as those working in agriculture.)

Chainsaw boots to BS EN ISO 20345:2004 and bearing a shield depicting a chainsaw to show compliance with EN 381-3. (For occasional users working on even ground where there is little risk of tripping or snagging on undergrowth or brash, protective gaiters conforming to EN 381-9 may be worn in combination with steel-toe-capped safety boots.)

Lone working

The chainsaw should never be used while working alone. Another member of staff should always be present, wearing appropriate PPE, and at a safe distance in case of emergency.

First Aid

A first aid kit should always be at hand while using the chainsaw. Please refer to Health & Safety policy for in depth first aid information.