

## Safe Work Method Statement

Job Task Summary: Chainsaw Operations

**Trim and cut felled trees  
Basic/Intermediate Tree Felling**

Notes: 1. This SWMS is not to be used for complex or hazardous (see overpage for definition) tree felling.  
2. There are 2 sets of competencies (depending on the industry) hence minor differences in terminology and operator levels.

**Can this involve High Risk Construction Work?**

Where there is a risk of a person falling more than two metres?	Yes
At workplaces where there is any movement of powered mobile plant?	Yes
Involving demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing	No

Excludes: Advanced Tree felling - Complex and hazardous trees

Applicable to the following worker type: employee, contractor, volunteer

SWMS completed by: Tony Griffiths Review and updated by Marcus Punch August 2021.

Site: All sites. **In addition, it is mandatory to conduct a [Safety 5](#).**

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

PPC (Mandatory): DRA field clothing including DRA long sleeve shirt. non-synthetic trousers, safety boots or safety gumboots (AS 2210.1.2010 Operational Protective Footwear), non-synthetic layers or outer clothing for warmth (if required).

PPE (mandatory) Hi Vis cotton vest. Chaps or tearproof trousers (AS/NZS 4453.3:1997 Protective clothing for users of hand-held chainsaws - Protective legwear) , helmet and visor, safety glasses, safety boots, hearing protection, gloves (optional except when adjusting the chain)

## Safe Work Method Statement

**Note:** DRA's default position is that Hi-Vis is to be worn by the operator, assistant & the spotter when undertaking chainsaw operations unless a Safety 5 (site specific dynamic risk assessment) considers it inappropriate.

### DRA Policies

1. As far as practicable, DRA will standardise the procurement of saws, ancillary equipment, and PPE.
2. **The Operations Team has agreed that we need clear and unambiguous standards which are understandable even by non-qualified members.** Accordingly, DRA has determined the following maximum tree trunk sizes which may be attempted matched to qualification and experience levels, noting that an operator should always work **within** their level of competence and confidence:
  - Basic felling qualification <50cm provided the tree is not considered a *hazardous tree*
  - Intermediate felling qualification <100cm provided the tree is not considered a *hazardous tree*
  - Advanced felling or higher qualification >100cm and *hazardous trees* subject to a risk assessment
  - These limits would apply unless the tree or surrounding trees are suspected or assessed as **hazardous**. These limits would allow felling of trees which have been impacted by fire (eg scorched or partially burnt but not assessed as affecting their structural integrity).
3. Until DRA has a capability of qualified and experienced chainsaw operators there is to be no felling of trees where the trunk diameter is more than the above limits. If there is any doubt about the tree, the felling task is not to be undertaken. **(This means that with one of the above tree-felling qualifications, trees which are fire impacted may be felled providing that a. the tree has no apparent or potential damage or complication and b. the trunk diameter is no more than above.)**
4. A suitable trauma first aid including a bleeding control kit is to be readily available at each worksite when using chainsaws.

A **hazardous tree** (sometimes known as a *problem tree*) is typically defined by one or more of the following characteristics:

- Very large ie more than 2.5 times the chainsaw guide bar length
- Dead, hollow and / or decaying tree or major branches
- Obvious or suspected damage due to fire or wind
- Suspected loose or broken branches
- Significant lean with recent cause or indicators of failure
- Evidence of longitudinal cracking
- Evidence of roots lifting, or an undercut or disturbed root system



## Safe Work Method Statement

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- Other indicators of serious weakness based on local knowledge.

## Safe Work Method Statement

R1 Risk without controls

R2 Risk with controls

Procedural step(s)	Possible hazard(s)	R1	Safety control(s)	Person responsible	R2
Training / experience  Chainsaw requirement	Severe injury or death from improper use Unauthorised use Property damage Complexity of cutting tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Basic</li> <li>○ Intermediate</li> <li>○ Advanced</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Operator must be accredited to national standard for chainsaw operations (Chainsaw Operators course)</li> <li>● DRA will implement a system to verify the competency (VoC) of operators</li> <li>● Operators to refer to CSIRO's Chainsaw Operators Manual – Safe Use of Chainsaws</li> <li>● Operators are to be familiar with the relevant Stihl Chain Saw Safety <a href="#">Manual</a> and relevant Stihl Owner's Instruction <a href="#">Manual</a> or equivalent manufacturer's manual.</li> <li>● Operator training and experience must match complexity of the cutting task</li> <li>● Newly accredited and inexperienced operators must be supervised by experienced operators</li> <li>● Workers should not undertake any activity where it is unsafe to do so</li> <li>● The Safety Officer (or STL in their absence) is to certify implementation of these safety controls.</li> <li>● At least one of the field staff must have completed First Aid training to at least the standards of HLTAID003 - Provide first aid (Release 6)</li> <li>● Operator to be physically fit and mentally prepared for task</li> <li>● The chainsaw should be suitable for the proposed task</li> <li>● Chainsaw to be securely stored to reduce the risk of unauthorised use</li> <li>● Refer to manufacturer's manual for chainsaw specifications and instructions</li> </ul>	<b>Operator/Operations Chief/Safety Officer</b>	
Preparation before operating a chainsaw	Equipment breakdown Injury from malfunction Property damage Fire risk <a href="#">Snagging or entanglement with clothing, hair or other items</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● STL and operators are to read and sign this SWMS before commencing work</li> <li>● <a href="#">The STL is to conduct</a> an onsite Safety 5 for the site and job</li> <li>● Complete the pre-start check in accordance with manufacturer instructions (e.g. sharpness / tension / lubrication)</li> <li>● Report any faults or damage, clearly tag faulty equipment</li> <li>● Use appropriate PPE (e.g. hard hat, hearing protection, eye and face protection, high-visibility vest or shirt, cut resistant gloves (when handling the blade), cut resistant leg protection, steel cap safety boots)</li> <li>● Check that suitable first aid kit is on hand and emergency plan is available</li> <li>● Check that suitable fire control kit is on hand</li> <li>● Clear work area and remove physical hazards and identify any electrical hazards</li> <li>● Keep other people at a safe distance (e.g. use barriers, signage)</li> <li>● Check environmental conditions (e.g. high winds, dry vegetation)</li> <li>● Workers are always to be buddied and are never to work alone</li> </ul>	<b>STL/ Operator / assistant/ Spotter</b>	

## Safe Work Method Statement

	Loose clothing and hair		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure no loose clothing (including safety vests)</li> <li>• Ensure long hair is restrained.</li> </ul>		
Starting Technique	Laceration Sprains, strains Equipment damage from chain striking ground or another object Exhaust fumes Fire risk Eye injury Hearing damage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep at least 3 metres from refuelling location</li> <li>• Start chainsaw in well-ventilated area</li> <li>• Remove chain guard before starting</li> <li>• Place chainsaw on solid surface</li> <li>• Engage chain brake</li> <li>• NEVER DROP START</li> <li>• Follow manufacturer's cold / hot start procedure for make and model of chainsaw</li> </ul>	<b>Operator</b>	
Operating chainsaw	Laceration Sprains, strains Equipment damage from chain striking ground or another object Exhaust fumes Fire risk Eye injury Hearing damage Blade Kickback / pushback / pull-in Falling trees / branches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the chainsaw firmly with both hands</li> <li>• Accelerate engine to full speed before and during a cut</li> <li>• Maintain correct balance and posture, <b>noting this will be more difficult on slopes or rocky, uneven, unstable or slippery ground.</b></li> <li>• Avoid reaching above shoulder height</li> <li>• Do not overbalance - shift position rather than overreaching or overextending</li> <li>• Stand to the side of the cutting path of the chainsaw</li> <li>• Cut only one log at a time</li> <li>• Stay aware of the location of the guide bar nose</li> <li>• Never let the nose of the guide bar contact any object</li> <li>• Reduce fatigue by taking regular rest breaks appropriate to the working environment - at least every 2 hours take a 'stop and stretch' break</li> <li>• Operators may use an assistant to clear debris and maintain a clear working area. This person is to be equipped with appropriate PPE. An assistant is <b>never</b> to hold branches which are being sawn.</li> <li>• A spotter is always to be deployed to help ensure the safety of the operation, including ensuring that the exclusion zone remains clear.</li> <li>• Members qualified to trim and crosscut level or who are inexperienced are not to operate larger saws or blades beyond 18-20 inches.</li> </ul>	<b>Operator/ STL</b>	

## Safe Work Method Statement

Tree Felling	<p>Laceration Sprains, strains Equipment damage from chain striking ground or another object Exhaust fumes Fire risk Eye injury Hearing damage Blade Kickback / pushback / pull-in Falling trees / branches <a href="#">Risks to persons within the exclusion zone</a></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for felling and assess the site</li> <li>• Communicate requirements with ST and agree on site control measures</li> <li>• Identify and assess trees to be felled for size, significant defects and any characteristics causing excessive complexity. This should include an assessment of adjoining trees.</li> <li>• Confirm tree(s) are within operator authorisation and competence; seek assistance or determine tree(s) is not to be felled</li> <li>• Select suitable escape route and clear of growth and other obstacles according to environmental care principles and statutory requirements</li> <li>• Fell individual trees using planned techniques according to site requirements, at a safe distance from other personnel in the work area</li> <li>• Adjust cutting technique in response to movement and condition of tree</li> <li>• Use planned escape route when tree starts to fall and monitor the fall and movement of tree on ground until determined stable</li> <li>• Delay movement back into the felling area until all tree material, including from adjacent tree crowns, has fallen</li> <li>• Identify and implement procedures for removal of trees that are hung-up</li> <li>• <a href="#">Do not allow any other person within the exclusion zone equal to 2 x the tree height. This includes spotters and assistants.</a></li> </ul>	Operator/ STL/ Safety Officer/ Spotter	
Spotters	<p>Sprains, strains Eye injury Hearing damage Impact with chainsaw Falling trees / branches</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Assistants and spotters are not to approach the sawyer without first attracting their attention.</a></li> <li>• Maintain correct balance and posture, <a href="#">noting this will be more difficult on slopes or rocky, uneven, unstable or slippery ground.</a></li> <li>• Reduce fatigue by taking regular rest breaks appropriate to the working environment - at least every 2 hours take a 'stop and stretch' break</li> <li>• Select suitable escape route and clear of growth and other obstacles according to environmental care principles and statutory requirements</li> <li>• Use planned escape route when tree starts to fall and monitor the fall and movement of tree on ground until determined stable</li> <li>• Delay movement back into the felling area until all tree material, including from adjacent tree crowns, has fallen</li> <li>• Identify and implement procedures for removal of trees that are hung-up</li> <li>• <a href="#">Do not allow any other person within the exclusion zone equal to 2 x the tree height. This includes spotters and assistants.</a></li> </ul>	Operator/ STL/ Safety Officer/ Spotter	

## Safe Work Method Statement

Refuelling	<p>Fire Fuel splash Fuel contaminated clothing Skin contact with fuel Inhale fumes Fuel spill</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Operator is to avoid wearing high-flammability (synthetic) clothing including trousers, shirt, vest if worn, and any outer garments.</li> <li>● Carry out refuelling in a well-ventilated area away from ignition sources</li> <li>● Use proper funnels and spouts to prevent spills and splashes</li> <li>● Only use approved fuel containers (AS2906 Fuel containers — Portable-plastic and metal)</li> <li>● Immediately remove or thoroughly wet any clothing contaminated by fuel.</li> <li>● Contain or mop up spilled fuel</li> <li>● Wipe the chainsaw dry of any spilled fuel</li> <li>● Where possible refuel when equipment is cold</li> </ul>	Operator	
After using chainsaw	<p>Laceration from saw-teeth Sprain, strains Burns from hot engine components</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow chainsaw to cool after use</li> <li>● Use correct manual handling techniques for lifting and carrying chainsaw</li> <li>● Clean and inspect chainsaw for damage</li> <li>● Report damage, malfunctions, or irregular performance</li> <li>● Clear work area and dispose / recycle waste materials</li> <li>● Maintenance actions are to be in accordance with the Owner's Instruction Manual.</li> <li>● The operator is to maintain the plant logbook and particularly note maintenance and repair requirements.</li> <li>● In consultation with the National Logistics Manager, the Logistics Chief is to arrange repairs and supply of spare parts. Note that DRA policy is to use genuine parts and repair by authorised dealers.</li> <li>● Wear gloves to avoid cuts from chain</li> </ul>	Operator/ Logistics Chief/ National Logistics Manager	
Chainsaw transport and storage	<p>Laceration from saw-teeth Sprain, strains Fuel spill from tip over Unauthorised use</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use correct manual handling techniques for lifting and carrying chainsaw</li> <li>● Prevent injury and equipment damage by using a chain guard or case</li> <li>● Set chainsaw level with fuel cap up</li> <li>● Be sure chainsaw cannot tip over and spill fuel or oil</li> <li>● Securely stow chainsaw for transport in vehicles</li> <li>● Avoid carrying chainsaw in passenger area of vehicle</li> <li>● For long term storage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drain fuel tank</li> <li>○ Run the saw at idle until it stops</li> <li>○ Remove chain and store in a container of oil</li> <li>○ Disconnect spark plug</li> <li>○ Store in a secure location to prevent unauthorised use</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Operator	

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OTHER JOB REQUIREMENTS			
<b>List staff skills/competencies and licences required for safe job performance:</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>National Competencies:</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>FWPCOT2239 – Trim and cut felled trees</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>FWPCOT2236 - Fall trees manually (basic) (Release 1)</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>FWPFGM3212 Fall trees manually (intermediate)</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Alternative National competencies:</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>AHCMOM213 - Operate and maintain chainsaws (Release 2)</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>AHPCPM203 Fell small trees</i>		
<b>List items of plant/equipment/tools required:</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	First Aid Kit, fire control kit, tree falling warning signs		
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Relevant codes of practice, legislation standards or critical risk controls that may be applicable:</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Relevant codes of practice, legislation standards or critical risk controls that may be applicable:</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AS2727-1997 Chainsaws- Guide to safe working practices		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AS2726.1-2004 Chainsaws- Safety requirements for general use		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AS2906 Fuel containers — Portable-plastic and metal		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chainsaw Operator Manual and Tree Fallers Manual (CSIRO Publications)		
<b>Maintenance checks, site/workplace inspections required:</b>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Relevant Stihl Chainsaw Owner's Instruction		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stihl Chain Saw Safety		
<b>Additional approvals, certificates, WorkCover approvals/permits required e.g. confined spaces, working at heights, hot works etc: Nil</b>			
<b>Has a risk assessment been completed for any work involving confined spaces, electrical work or diving work</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Approvals





## Safe Work Method Statement

This SWMS is approved by DRA national Director of Field Operations

Name	Signature	Date

**Site SWMS Approval** (Strike Team Leader/ Supervisor i.e. person responsible for ensuring compliance with SWMS)

*I have read and understand this SWMS. I have completed a site risk assessment with the chainsaw operator(s) and team members and will ensure compliance with the SWMS.*

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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**Operator/team confirmation**

*I have read and understand this Safe Work Method Statement. I have no medical conditions that may affect my ability to operate the vehicle.*

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

**Safety Officer confirmation (or Operations Chief in lieu)**

*I confirm that the safety controls detailed above are in place or will be acted upon. I can confirm that proposed tasks are within the scope of operations and that plant operators (if applicable) are duly authorised by the National Training Manager.*

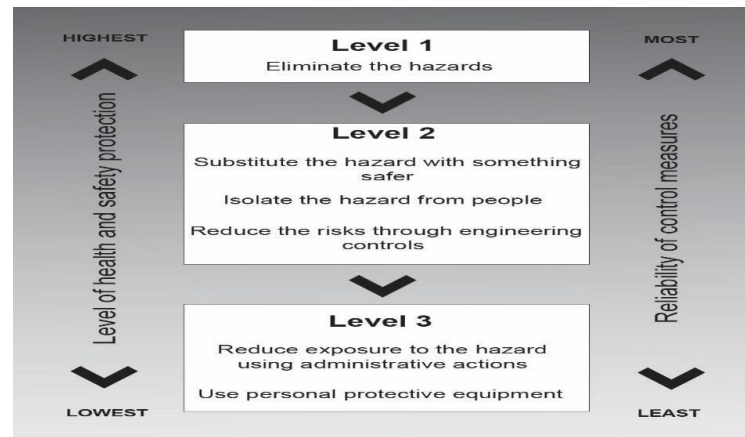
NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

## Safe Work Method Statement

### WHS RISK MATRIX

	Minor	Moderate	Substantial	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

### HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS



### Acknowledgements:

NSW Government – Department of Industry

NSW Government – Department of Primary Industries