

DRA Safety Management

Complex, hazardous or trees over 100cm in diameter

Scope

This protocol is to be followed when it is planned to fell large trees (over 100cm diameter) or trees which are assessed as potentially hazardous and may require complex felling techniques.

Definitions

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
- Other indicators of serious weakness based on local knowledge.

Background

The existing [SWMS](#) for Trim And Cut Felled Trees, Basic and Intermediate Felling remains applicable.

Many DRA operations follow natural disasters all of which can influence the complexity or hazards associated with tree felling. Additionally, in many areas large trees will be encountered. Felling any of these trees requires specialist skills and experience.

DRA policies

- Where possible, DRA will avoid the necessity to fell large, hazardous or complex trees.
- When operations are considered which will involve felling trees in this category, the decision processes in this protocol are to be followed.
- Ultimately, the National Director of Field Operations (NDFO) will approve the OPOD which will detail requirements to undertake such felling.
- DRA members who hold a DRA-validated qualification and have sufficient recent experience, may be authorised to fell trees which have a diameter greater than 100cm, are hazardous or are otherwise assessed as complex.

- DRA may engage contractors to undertake this work and/or conduct member training and mentoring providing they pass a *due diligence*¹ safety check.

Protocols

1. The **Theatre Commander (TC)** is to:
 - a. Explore opportunities to avoid this risk by seeking the support of another agency or entity to undertake the task in its entirety. In this case, **DRA members are not present on-site.**
 - b. If 1a. is impracticable, explore opportunities to engage an appropriate contractor who will be required to work collaboratively with DRA on-site. **The contractor may employ mobile plant which is preferred over the use of manual felling techniques.** The TC is required to undertake *due diligence* checks of the contractor as follows (including obtaining copies where appropriate):
 - i. any qualification, license or authorisation
 - ii. insurance currency including adverse history
 - iii. workers compensation currency including adverse history and lost time injuries
 - iv. safety management system including safe work procedures/SWMS/incident records
 - v. Review the contractor's processes for safety induction, supervision, monitoring and risk assessment.
 - vi. references from previous work

Due diligence checks are to be confirmed as complete by the NMFO before a contract is executed and the OPORD signed.
 - c. If neither 1a or 1b is practicable, the TC is to verify with the National Membership Manager available members' qualifications and experience to undertake the task.
 - d. Ensure the conduct of any training and mentoring proposed during the operation, is conducted and supervised by an appropriately qualified person. Such plans are to be approved by the National

¹ Due diligence means taking reasonable steps to ensure a business is complying with its obligations under health and safety legislation.

Training Manager in accordance with the Chainsaw Training Continuum.

2. The **Mission Commander(s)** is to:
 - a. Ensure the conduct of a site induction for contractors
 - b. Ensure the contractor conducts a site specific assessment with the DRA team and identifies other risks and mitigations (as with the DRA Safety 5 process)
 - c. Ensure an appropriate level of monitoring and supervision including the contractor's adherence to their company SWMS.