

# Tree felling

## How to use this Risk Assessment

This risk assessment document is for LCV Task Leaders. It identifies the risks associated with tree felling tasks. Task Leaders must use it in conjunction with LCV's Site Safety risk assessment and other activity-based generic risk assessments to determine the contents of the pre-task safety talk and the organisation of activities that take place during the task.

**This risk assessment must be used in conjunction with the *Site safety* assessment and perhaps other task-specific risk assessments as appropriate for the activities being carried out. In particular, consider whether the *Winching* assessment is relevant. Consult the *Guidance notes* for full instructions.**

## Generic risk assessment

**Training/Supervision required**  
**PPE required**

Review risk assessment and brief personnel on risks and controls before work starts  
Protective footwear and gloves. Hard hats. Additional PPE in line with tool manufacturer's instructions or detailed below.



**Lothians  
Conservation  
Volunteers**

Common hazards Associated with the work activity	Who is at risk? Public, staff, trainees, volunteers	Risk rating Risk level before controls are in place	Control measures Measures that must be in place before work is allowed to start	Residual risk rating Risk remaining after controls are in place
Striking injury - Falling tress / branches Overhanging / protruding vegetation	Public & volunteers	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> fell trees larger than about 200mm (8") at the base unless they are trained and competent to do so.</li> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> attempt to recover a hung-up tree unless they are trained and competent to do so.</li> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> go within two tree-lengths of any tree being worked on</li> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> work on any tree while there are other people within two tree-lengths who are not directly assisting.</li> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must</b> wear hard hats.</li> <li>Tell volunteers that the hard hat <b>must</b> fit snugly and that they <b>must not</b> wear anything under it</li> <li>Tell volunteers involved in felling that they <b>must</b> identify and maintain a clear escape route away from the tree as it falls.</li> <li>Warn all of danger from deadwood in the canopy loosened by falling trees</li> <li>Inspect the site for trees containing deadwood in the crown and cordon them off using hazard tape.</li> <li>Ensure good working practice as outlined in BTCV handbooks – <i>Woodland and Hand Tools</i></li> </ul>	Medium
Contact with Overhead Powerlines	Volunteers	High (applies only to sites with overhead power lines).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> fell a tree within two tree-lengths of an overhead line.</li> <li>If a tree does touch a cable, tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> touch it. Call the electricity company immediately.</li> </ul>	Low
Injury from bow / sheath saws / axes / pruning equipment	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> wear gloves when using billhooks or axes</li> <li>Advise volunteers to wear a glove on the hand holding wood when sawing.</li> </ul>	Low

Lothians Conservation Volunteers Generic Risk Assessments

<b>Common hazards</b> Associated with the work activity	<b>Who is at risk?</b> Public, staff, trainees, volunteers	<b>Risk rating</b> Risk level before controls are in place	<b>Control measures</b> Measures that must be in place before work is allowed to start	<b>Residual risk rating</b> Risk remaining after controls are in place
Injury from failing ropes	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check ropes for visible wear or damage before use. Do not use damaged ropes.</li> <li>Use 16mm polypropylene ropes long enough to keep those using them clear of the felling area</li> </ul>	Low
Manual handling	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> fell any tree greater than about 8" (20 cm) diameter at the base unless they are trained and competent to do so.</li> <li>Advise volunteers to cut logs to manageable size.</li> <li>Plan timber extraction routes to minimise carrying.</li> </ul>	Low
Adverse weather	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cease work in high winds</li> </ul>	Low
Puncture wounds	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise volunteers to clear the ground of material before kneeling and to take care to avoid kneeling on anything sharp.</li> <li>Advise volunteers to wear stout leather gloves when handling thorny material.</li> <li>Advise volunteers to wear eye protection if there is a risk that thorns may go into their eyes.</li> </ul>	Low
Chemicals	Volunteers/Public	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not work with any chemicals (e.g. arboricide) unless a detailed risk assessment has been carried out and documented.</li> </ul>	Low
Chainsaw	Volunteers/Public	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LCV's insurance does not generally cover chainsaw use. Before you allow any volunteer to use a chainsaw confirm that the necessary additional payment has been made and that the current policy covers chainsaw use.</li> <li>Tell volunteers that they <b>must not</b> use a chainsaw unless they hold a valid chainsaw certificate and are adhering to the BTCV code of practice on chainsaw use.</li> <li>Discuss and agree safe working practice with the chainsaw operator.</li> </ul>	Low

**Document control**

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