

Tree felling

How to use this Risk Assessment

This risk assessment document is for LCV Task Leaders. It identifies the common risks associated with tree felling tasks and common measures which can be taken to control them. Task Leaders must use it in conjunction with LCV's Site Safety risk assessment and other activity-based generic risk assessments to assist them in their own risk assessment which will 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
Legal action following incidents	Volunteers, especially trustees	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCV's insurance does not cover any felling or attempted felling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by volunteers working alone; of trees larger than 150 millimetres (6 inches) diameter at the base; of trees more than 6 metres (19 feet) in height; by volunteers who are not at ground level or on ladders less than 2m in height; and by volunteers who do not have appropriate training and safety equipment. Tell volunteers that they must not do or attempt any felling that breaches any of the restrictions above 	Low
Unfamiliar volunteer overconfidence	Volunteers	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not trust new / unfamiliar volunteers who say that they know how to fell trees. Advise them that LCV needs to assess their competence. Assess the competence of all new / unfamiliar volunteers and either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let them continue; Arrange for appropriate training and supervision; or Find an alternative non-felling activity. 	Low

Lothians Conservation Volunteers Generic Risk Assessments

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"> • Tell volunteers that they must not fell trees if they are alone. • Tell volunteers that they must not fell trees larger than 150 millimetres (6 inches) at the base. LCV's insurance does not cover attempts to fell larger trees. • Tell volunteers that they must not fell trees more than 6 metres (19 feet) in height. LCV's insurance does not cover attempts to fell larger trees. • Tell volunteers that the must not work from ladders more than 2m in height. • Tell volunteers that they must not attempt to fell any tree unless they have received appropriate training and have appropriate safety equipment. • Warn all of danger from deadwood in the canopy loosened by falling trees. • Inspect the site for trees containing deadwood in the crown and cordon them off using hazard tape. • Tell volunteers that they must wear hard hats. • Tell volunteers that the hard hat must fit snugly and that they must not wear anything under it. • Tell volunteers that they must not go within two tree-lengths of any tree being worked on. • Tell volunteers that they must not work on any tree while there are other people within two tree-lengths who are not directly assisting. • Tell volunteers involved in felling that they must identify and maintain a clear escape route away from the tree as it falls. • Tell volunteers that they must not attempt to recover a hung-up tree unless they are trained and competent to do so. • Ensure good working practice such as that outlined in the TCV handbooks. 	Medium
Contact with Overhead Powerlines	Volunteers	High (applies only to sites with overhead power lines).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell volunteers that they must not fell a tree within two tree-lengths of an overhead line. • If a tree does touch a cable, tell volunteers that they must not touch it. Stop work and call the electricity company immediately. 	Low
Working at height	Volunteers	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell volunteers that they must not undertake any felling operations unless they are at ground level or on a stable ladder less than 2m in height. • If felling would require a ladder then strongly advise client / volunteers to obtain professional help. 	Low
Injury from bow / sheath saws / axes / pruning equipment	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell volunteers that they must not wear gloves when using billhooks or axes • Advise volunteers to wear a glove on the hand holding wood when sawing. 	Low

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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
Injury from falling ropes	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check ropes for visible wear or damage before use. Do not use damaged ropes. Use 16mm polypropylene ropes long enough to keep those using them clear of the felling area 	Low
Manual handling	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise volunteers to cut logs to a manageable size. Plan timber extraction routes to minimise carrying. 	Low
Adverse weather	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cease work in high winds 	Low
Puncture wounds	Volunteers	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise volunteers to clear the ground of material before kneeling and to take care to avoid kneeling on anything sharp. Advise volunteers to wear stout leather gloves when handling thorny material. Advise volunteers to wear eye protection. 	Low
Chemicals	Volunteers/Public	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not work with any chemicals (e.g. arboricide) unless a specific and detailed risk assessment has been carried out. 	Low
Chainsaws	Volunteers/Public	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCV's insurance does not generally cover chainsaw use. Before allowing any volunteer to use a chainsaw confirm that the necessary additional payment has been made and that the current policy covers chainsaw use. Tell volunteers that they must not use a chainsaw unless they hold a valid chainsaw certificate and are adhering to the TCV code of practice on chainsaw use. Discuss and agree safe working practice with the chainsaw operator. 	Low