

## Chainsaws – Basic Guidance for users

### Introduction

*The following is a short summary of government and industry advice and should be read in conjunction with that.*

Chainsaws are potentially dangerous machines which can cause major injury if used by untrained people. Anyone who uses a chainsaw should have received adequate training and be competent in using a chainsaw for that type of task.

In forestry and arboriculture chainsaws caused 5 deaths between 2004 and 2011. Many more injuries were caused by sawing and cutting tools:  
131 suffered major injuries and  
355 suffered injuries that kept them off work for more than three days.

HSE's investigations show that most fatal and major injuries involve chainsaw operators taking shortcuts and not following good practice guidance. Usually the reason is to save time!

Due to the very high risk from the operation of chainsaws, users should be trained to the levels of competency expected in the workplace. It is recommended that chainsaws are not operated by persons under 18.

As with all activities, a thorough risk assessment should be carried out and suitable controls put in place, before any action is taken.

Also, remember, you may need to check whether a tree can actually be cut down and has not got a protection order restricting it.

### Law

The HSE states:

*The Approved Code of Practice, Safe use of work equipment, supporting regulation 9 of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER 98) (see 'Further reading') sets a minimum standard of competence for people using chainsaws in tree work:*

*'All workers who use a chainsaw should be competent to do so. Before using a chainsaw to carry out work on or in a tree, a worker should have received appropriate training and obtained a relevant certificate of competence or national competence award, unless they are undergoing such training and are adequately supervised.'*

### Training & Competency

The HSE recognises the following as the awarding bodies for the training and competent use of chainsaws.

City and Guilds NPTC      [www.nptc.org.uk](http://www.nptc.org.uk)

Lantra

[www.lantra-awards.co.uk](http://www.lantra-awards.co.uk)

**Further, more detailed information is available from:**

HSE – Guidance Chainsaws at Work

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg317.pdf>

Forestry Industry Safety Accord – FISA Safety Guide 805

<http://ukfisa.com/assets/files/safetyLibrary/FISA%20805%20Training%20and%20Certificates.pdf>

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