

Carry out emergency treework

Overview

This standard covers all the activities that may be required to carry out emergency treework, together with the core requirements and responsibilities.

Activities could include some or all of the following: responding to emergency call outs, liaising with emergency services and other agencies, assessing the situation and determining the action and equipment required, using appropriate tools and equipment to carry out emergency treework.

You could be working to given instructions that define the activities required but you will be expected to determine how to carry out these activities on site.

You will need to take account of the situation and assess the risks involved when carrying out emergency treework and liaise with the emergency response coordinator.

Emergency treework team personnel must be appropriately trained and experienced in operating the equipment needed, and hold current certification, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Your work must conform to all relevant legislation and codes of practice, industry standards and guidance.

Falls from trees or being hit by falling trees, sections of trees, branches or other falling objects can kill or seriously injure workers on site or members of the public.

Confirm that:

- safe practices are adopted for accessing and working with trees
- the layout and organisation of the work area protects all parties from the risk of falling objects
- risk zones are established and people are prohibited from entering the zone
- risk zones are, where reasonably practicable, clearly marked, signed and guarded
- communication methods between all workers on site are robust and effective

Additional resources may be required on site, such as banksmen, to help manage any risk associated with anyone possibly entering the work site, including the public.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Core requirements and responsibilities

1. obtain the relevant information to carry out the work activities in accordance with organisational procedures
2. maintain the health and safety of yourself and others at all times, in accordance with the relevant legislation and codes of practice
3. assess the risks associated with the site and the emergency situation before starting work and throughout the activity
4. confirm sufficient control measures are implemented and emergency planning and procedures relevant to the site established
5. select the safest working methods, making use of mechanical methods where this is safer, in accordance with the assessed risks and organisational procedures, and plan work accordingly
6. confirm that relevant training, experience and certification is in place to undertake the work to be carried out, and recognise your own competence limitations
7. prepare the tools, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) required for emergency treework operations, prior to emergency call outs, in accordance with legal requirements and manufacturers' instructions
8. maintain the safety and security of tools and equipment on site
9. minimise damage or disturbance to the site and surrounding area while carrying out the work and confirm that the site is left in a safe and tidy condition
10. implement best practice approaches to sustainability that are appropriate for the work being carried out
11. deal effectively with issues that arise within the scope and limitations of your responsibility and report issues that cannot be resolved, in accordance with organisational procedures
12. complete and store all relevant documentation in accordance with legal and organisational requirements

Implement emergency treework

1. liaise with the emergency response coordinator to establish requirements and to secure the site to protect the emergency treework team members, other users of the site and the public
2. establish arrangements for communication and teamwork with those involved in the emergency

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3. check any statutory requirements that might be in place that may prohibit or place conditions on the emergency treework to be done
4. check for the presence of both underground and overhead utilities and take the required action if they are identified, in accordance with safety requirements
5. identify dead and diseased wood, insecure branches and broken tops both in the trees to be severed, and in adjacent standing trees
6. assess and determine the emergency treework required and plan methods of work in accordance with the situation and safety requirements
7. determine which activities are safe and appropriate to be carried out at the time of the emergency, and which can be carried out at a later time
8. identify tension and compression in windblown and uprooted trees and adapt working methods to take account of this, in accordance with current industry guidance, using suitable restraint equipment where required
9. carry out emergency treework in accordance with safety requirements and current industry guidance, especially when working with cranes and mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)
10. deal with timber and arisings created by the emergency treework, in accordance with legal and organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Core requirements and responsibilities

1. how to identify and access information relevant to the required work
2. how to identify hazards and assess the risks associated with the site and the work to be carried out, and the importance of site-specific risk assessment and control measures that are appropriate for your area of work
3. the relevant health and safety procedures and Safe Systems of Work (SSoW)
4. current legislation, industry guidance, organisational policies, procedures and protocols, business and professional ethics that are relevant to your area of work and to which you must adhere
5. the legal, industry and organisational requirements for training, experience and certification to undertake the work activities required, and the importance of not undertaking work that is beyond your level of competence
6. the tools, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) required for emergency treework and how to safely, prepare, use, carry out operator maintenance, and store these, in accordance with manufacturer's and workplace instructions, and the relevant legal requirements
7. the legal requirements for checking equipment and why it is important to maintain all equipment to a high standard
8. technology used in your area of work and how to use it
9. the potential impact of your work on the site and surrounding area and how this can be minimised
10. your and the organisation's responsibility for protecting the environment and working sustainably
11. the issues that can occur when carrying out emergency treework, the actions to take and organisational procedures for reporting issues that cannot be resolved
12. the scope and limitations of your competence, responsibilities and accountability
13. the legal and organisation requirements for the completion and secure storage of documentation

Implement emergency treework

1. the different levels of emergency treework, how to prioritise emergencies and the situations when it would not be possible or appropriate to respond to a treework emergency
2. how to identify tree species and tree families

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3. the importance of preparing response kits and vehicles prior to emergency call outs
4. the importance of maintaining effective communication with the response coordinator and working with emergency services and other agencies when carrying out emergency treework
5. the importance of risk zone management, the correct use of warning signs and barriers to inform and protect others while work is carried out and the procedures for temporary traffic management, where required
6. how to identify the presence of utilities and the effect of this on the work required
7. how to assess and prioritise the work required and establish plans and methods of work, taking into account the type of emergency, the situation on site and any statutory requirements in place
8. how to identify top, bottom and side tension and compression in windblown and uprooted trees, the risks involved and when a winch or other restraint equipment is necessary
9. the dangers of working on damaged or diseased trees and the precautions that must be taken
10. when it is necessary to move trees on the ground to a safer working area and how this can be done
11. the importance of continuously assessing risks and amending actions when carrying out emergency treework
12. how timber and arisings from the emergency treework operations should be dealt with

Scope/range related to knowledge and understanding

Different methods of dealing with arisings include: burning, stacking, burying, spreading, further processing, re-using as other products

How to work in the following situations:

- in close proximity to buildings or overhead utilities
- in close proximity to the highway or railway
- in close proximity to water
- with fallen trees
- with damaged or diseased trees
- with damaged buildings
- in poor weather
- with damaged overhead power lines that may be live
- with damaged overhead cables
- with damaged underground utilities
- with burst drains
- with environmental disasters: raw sewage, etc.
- under artificial lights

How to carry out the following emergency treework operations:

- partially uprooted and hung-up trees
- broken or partially broken but not uprooted trees
- partial tree failure
- whole tree failure
- severing root plates
- winching, propping and lifting

using a winch or other restraint equipment for side tension or to prevent timber

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rolling/moving on a slope

using winches to restrain overhanging root-plates

selecting and using anchor points adequate for the load applied

- assisted felling
- crown breakdown
- accessing a failed tree using a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP), crane or climbing techniques
- cutting timber under high tension
- using “V” cuts and other alternative methods to sever timber under very heavy tension
- cutting a “long log” when severing buried stems or unstable root-plates

Glossary

Banksman/signaller – a trained and competent person who controls the movements of machinery, procedures and people on a site to ensure work activities are carried out safely.

A hierarchy of controls must be established between the banksman/signaller and other operators to ensure that pre-agreed signals are clearly transmitted and understood.

- **Health and safety risks from chainsaw use:**
 - being cut by the saw
- hit or crushed by moving timber
- noise-induced hearing loss
- hand-arm vibration (HAV)
- exhaust fumes from petrol driven chainsaws
- exposure to oils
- effects of fatigue/dehydration on ability to work safely
- other work equipment or activities on site

Information required to carry out work activities could include:

- drawings
- plans
- schedules
- specifications
- method statements
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- manufacturer's instructions
- customer requirements
- quality assurance requirements
- industry standards (e.g. British Standards)

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- verbal or written instructions
- industry guidance (e.g. FISA)

Organisational procedures refer to procedures set by the organisation you are employed by or the organisation that you are doing the work on behalf of (the client or customer)

Response coordinator e.g.

- fire brigade
- police
- utility representative
- local authority
- other responsible organisation

Safe System of Work (SSoW) – is a method of work that puts in place control measures arising from a risk assessment, in order to manage identified hazards, which are broken down into four elements: safe person; safe equipment; safe place; and safe practice.

Statutory requirements could include:

- Tree preservation orders
- Conservation areas
- Environmental legislation
- Felling licences
- Designated areas e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Archaeological or historic features
- Watercourses and guidelines in place to protect/preserve them
- Amenity and landscape considerations

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