

Chainsaw Safety Tips for Firewood Cutters

Developed from:
Vermont Logging Safety Handbook; January 1993
and
Safe Timber Harvesting; UNH Cooperative Extension; 1999
(Originally published by the Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc.
(FISTA), Rhinelander, Wisconsin in 1997)

Make Safety a Habit

Each year lives are lost and many severe injuries occur in timber harvesting accidents.

Working in the woods is a risky business, but woodcutters must remember that most injuries are caused by their own unsafe actions. It is impossible to guarantee you will not have an accident, but following the tips below will help to insure that each trip to the woods is a safe one!

Always read and follow your chainsaw owner's manual!

Tools & Clothing for Chainsaw Operators

Requirements for tools and clothing will vary with the time of year and the weather, but all woodcutters should have quality tools, basic protective clothing, and well-maintained equipment.

Always Wear the Following:

- **Hardhat**
- **Eye Protection**- Visors, screens, or goggles protect eyes from flying chips, saw dust and twigs or branches.
- **Hearing Protection**- Ear plugs or ear muffs.
- **Cut Resistant Pants or Chaps**- ballistic nylon or Kevlar pads prevent or lessen the severity of cuts to the legs.
- **Safety Boots**- Steel toes prevent crushed toes and non-slip soles and heels help prevent falling and tripping. Cut-resistant inserts help to prevent or lessen the severity of cuts to the feet.
- **Leather-Palmed Gloves**- provide a safe grip and reduce the risk of cuts and abrasions.
- **Snug Fitting Clothing**- is much less likely to become tangled in brush or in the saw.

Have Available and Use:

- **A Safe and Well-Maintained Saw with a Chain Brake...** Read and follow the Owner's Manual.
- **A Saw File and Wrench...** Keep your saw sharp and in good working order.
- **An Ax or Hammer and Felling Wedges...** your saw manual and a chainsaw safety training course will teach you to use them properly and effectively.
- **Safety Can for Chainsaw Fuel...** proper fuel storage will help to prevent explosions and fires.
- **First Aid Kit and Training...** the life they save could be yours!
- **Fire Extinguisher...** can prevent your saw from burning up, or a fire from spreading.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

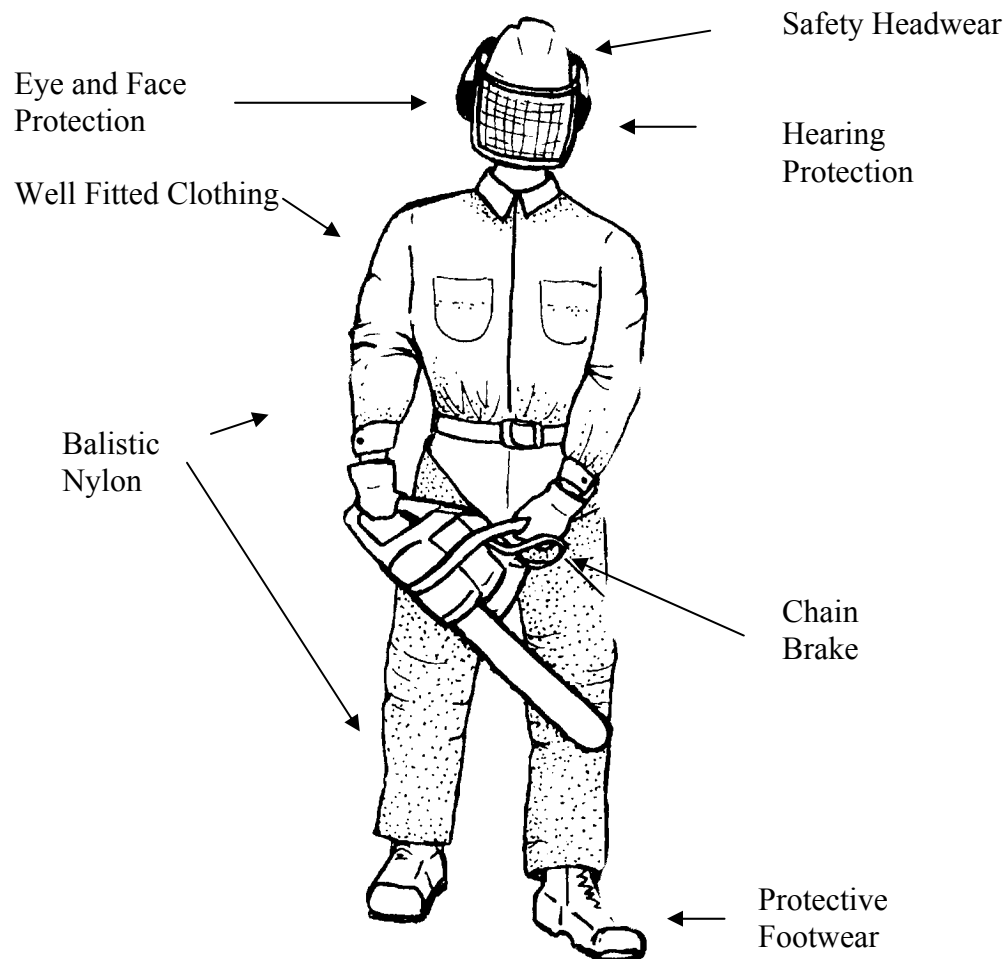


Diagram originally published by the Forest Industry Safety and Training Alliance, Inc. (FISTA), Rhinelander, Wisconsin in 1997

Suggested First-Aid Kit Contents:

- 4 rolled bandages
- 4 2"X2" gauze sponges
- 4 3"X3" gauze sponges
- 4 4"X4" gauze sponges
- 2 trauma dressings
- 1 container first-aid cream
- 4 antiseptic wipes
- 2 butterfly closures
- 2 large butterfly closures
- 2 fingertip bandages
- 2 knuckle bandages
- 5 band-aids
- 2 triangular bandages
- rubber gloves

Optional items:

- eye pads
- adhesive tape
- cold packs
- hot packs
- rescue blanket
- ace bandage
- aspirin
- Benedryl (for bee stings)

Important Safe Felling Rules:

1. Always look at the top of the tree for widow-makers, lodged trees, wires, and other hazards. Plan the direction for the fall of the tree. Clear an area around the tree before starting to cut.
2. Cut down all dead snags or stubs first.
3. Prepare a line of retreat 45° away from the line of fall. Be sure you are not hemmed in with underbrush or obstructions.
4. Before starting to cut, make sure no one is closer than two tree lengths away from felling operations.
5. Make a notch on all trees no matter how small the diameter.
6. Give a timely warning yell understood by all present, just before the back or final cut is started.
7. Never cut a standing tree completely through. Leave sufficient wood between the notch and the back cut for the tree to hinge on; otherwise, you may lose control of the tree and it could kick back.
8. Never leave a lodged or hung tree; always push or pull it down with the aid of a skidder, etc. If it has to be left unattended for any length of time, properly mark it to indicate a danger area.
9. Never cut on days of high wind velocity.
10. Never climb or cut sections out of lodged trees.

11. Never leave a lodged tree, as any vibration from machinery or a sudden wind could bring it down on an unsuspecting person.
12. Fell with the lean of the tree whenever possible, and into clear areas.
13. Retreat from a falling tree at a 45⁰ angle away from the direction of fall and at least 20 feet from the tree. If possible, stand behind another tree at the end of your retreat path.
14. ***Always read and follow your chainsaw Owner's Manual, and participate in a chainsaw training course before you go to the woods!***

Safety Training and Resources:

Game of Logging

Chainsaw Safety Training Programs and Providers

<http://www.gameoflogging.com/>

Forest Applications Training

Chainsaw Safety Training & Resources

<http://www.forestapps.com/>

FREE DVD Offer: **Sensible Wood Cutting- Tips From the Pros**

By Forest Applications Training and Husqvarna Forest & Garden

<http://www.forestapps.com/videos.html>

Chainsaw Safety, Operation & Maintenance (STIHL)

On-Line Video

http://www.stihlusa.com/information/info_lit_video.html

OSHA Logging Web Site:

http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/logging_advisor/mainpage.html

National Timber Harvesting & Transportation Safety Foundation:

<http://www.loggingsafety.com/>

Forest Industry Safety & Training Alliance:

<http://hosting.northernweb.net/fista/>

Northeast Loggers Association (Logger's Guide to Training Programs)

<http://www.loggertraining.com/>