

Use a pole-mounted tree pruner

Overview

This standard is about using a pole-mounted tree pruner. It describes the standard for the pruning of trees using pole-mounted, long-reach pruning equipment, which may include: extendable pruning saws, powered pole pruners, or loppers.

The trees will be cut by removing branches using cuts that are finished to the current standard for pruning in treework.

This standard does not include using hedge trimmers.

When working with machinery you need to be appropriately trained, and hold current certification where required, in line with relevant legislation.

Your work must conform to all relevant legislation and codes of practice when carrying out this work.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. assess the risks associated with the site and the proposed work
2. select and implement appropriate working method in accordance with the assessed risks
3. select and use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the work
4. select, prepare and use the appropriate tools and equipment, safely and effectively
5. confirm all equipment has been checked and is fit for purpose
6. establish a safe working area including a safe work position for the removal of branches using a pole-mounted tree pruner
7. prepare the site by removing obstacles in the pruning area, including climbing vegetation, as appropriate
8. select pruning methods that are relevant to the given specification, branch sizes and condition
9. reduce and remove branches using appropriate cuts, and in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines
10. deal appropriately with waste
11. ensure the site is left in a condition which meets environmental requirements, in accordance with the specification
12. maintain the health and safety of yourself and others at all times, in accordance with relevant legislation

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. how to identify hazards and assess risks
2. how to interpret risk assessments
3. the selection, use and care of personal protective equipment (PPE)
4. the types of tools and equipment required and how to maintain and use these safely and effectively in line with the manufacturer's recommendations
5. the legal requirements for checking equipment
6. emergency planning and procedures relevant to the site
7. how to identify which trees need to be pruned and the pruning method to be used
8. how to select the appropriate equipment for the work required
9. the recognition of tension and compression in the branches, and the ways to remove a saw that becomes trapped in a cut
10. the methods of reducing and pruning heavy and/or long branches using a pole-mounted tree pruner
11. the implications on the work of different tree species, their condition and the time of year when you are planning to perform pruning
12. the potential impact of your work on the environment and how this can be minimised
13. your responsibilities under relevant health and safety and environmental legislation

Glossary

Pruning methods:

- 1 Target pruning is the cutting back to a branch or trunk, normally using a three-cut process. All cuts should be made just outside the line of the branch bark ridge and/or branch collar of the retained branch or the trunk.
- 2 Formative pruning is the removal of, for example, unwanted secondary leading shoots and potentially weak forks that could fail in adverse weather conditions such as strong wind or snow.
- 3 Crown thinning involves the removal of a proportion of secondary and small, live branch growth throughout the crown to produce an even density of foliage around a well-spaced and balanced branch structure.
- 4 Pollarding is the removal of all the branches from a tree.
- 5 Crown reduction is the cutting back to a side bud or branch to retain a flowing branch line without leaving, in particular, “inter-nodal” stumps.
- 6 Crown reshaping is a combination of formative pruning and crown reduction.
- 7 Crown lifting involves the removal of the lower branches from a tree to a given height above ground level, either by the removal of whole branches or only those parts that extend below the desired clear height.
- 8 Basal growth results from the pruning of many species, even when carried out to standard, where very rapid growth of multiple new shoots can result, especially when they are exposed to full light.

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