

## Carry out the aerial cutting of trees using free-fall techniques

### Overview

This standard is about carrying out the aerial cutting of trees using free-fall techniques. It includes the removal of a single limb or parts of a tree canopy as well as the complete removal of trees without the use of rigging equipment. It is also about the removal of tree sections from the crown using free-fall or hand-thrown techniques.

You will need to carry out a tree hazard evaluation and perform a “working at height” assessment before starting this work. You will carry out cutting operations using appropriate access techniques.

You will gain access and carry out cutting operations in line with the above assessment from a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) or from a rope and harness.

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.

This standard is only suitable for those who are already competent in climbing trees and/or using a MEWP.

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### Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. perform a tree hazard evaluation and a “working at height” assessment prior to commencing work
2. assess the risks associated with the site and the proposed work
3. select and use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the work
4. inspect the access equipment to ensure it is safe and fit for use under the manufacturer's instructions and the relevant legislation
5. select and use access and positioning methods appropriate to the assessed risks and the method statement
6. select an appropriate anchor point for the access equipment so that the anchor point/position will not be compromised by the tree or any part of the work being carried out
7. assess the size, timber diameter, length and weight of the pieces to be cut
8. identify the desired drop zone for the pieces
9. select, prepare and use the appropriate tools and equipment safely and effectively
10. select and execute the appropriate cut
11. communicate and control ground staff in relation to the progress of operations
12. use the associated equipment to aid the removal of sections into the desired drop zone to protect infrastructure and targets
13. deal appropriately with the arisings
14. ensure the site is left in a condition which meets environmental requirements, in accordance with the specification
15. 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 evaluate the tree for hazards and the implications of the hazards identified
2. the risks associated with the site and the proposed work
3. how to select and implement appropriate working method, in accordance with the assessed risks
4. the selection, use and care of personal protective equipment (PPE)
5. the emergency planning and procedures relevant to the site
6. how to identify tree species and how the species and condition of trees will affect your work
7. the types of tools and equipment required and how to maintain and use these safely and effectively in line with the manufacturer's recommendations
8. the legal requirements for checking equipment
9. how to select appropriate anchor points and position for the access equipment so that the anchor point will not be compromised by the work being carried out
10. the importance of accurate and appropriate cuts when removing tree sections and the effect of the cuts on the section being removed
11. the potential effects of tree section removal on the retained parts of the tree
12. how to communicate and control ground staff when carrying out the aerial cutting of trees
13. how to use associated equipment to aid the removal of sections
14. the potential impact of your work on the environment and how this can be minimised
15. your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation

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**Scope/range**

Carry out pruning operations by climbing or using a MEWP or both:

- reductions
- crown-lifting
- re-pollarding
- thinning
- crown cleaning

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