

DEPARTMENT POLICY #14

CHAINSAW POLICY

Version date: May 11, 2018; Adopted May 22, 2018

PURPOSE: The Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (the “Department” and “DNCR”) has responsibility for the oversight of employee health and safety issues, including appropriate employee training in the safe operation of chainsaw equipment that may be part of and specified within an employee’s regular and routine job responsibilities. Management and all employees within the Department, and specifically those employees trained and certified to operate chainsaws, are equally obligated to adhere to the Policy contained herein.

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A. SCOPE: This Policy and its program procedures shall:

- A-1. Apply to all DNCR employees and specifically those employees who are designated and certified to operate chainsaws in the performance of their duties.
- A-2. Safety standards shall be consistent with and in accordance with safety standards set by the NH Department of Labor (NH-DOL) under administrative rule Lab1400, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and American National Standards Institute (ANSI), as amended, for chainsaw equipment and personal protective equipment (“PPE”).

B. AUTHORIZATIONS & REQUIRED ACTIONS:

- B-1. Bureau Administrators/Chiefs, the Park Operations Superintendent, Regional Foresters and Regional Park Supervisors (collectively, “Supervisors”) will determine and approve which employees will be trained and certified as chainsaw operators (“Operators”) and to what class level of certification.
- B-2. Supervisors serve as a point of contact for the administration of the Policy; and provide record keeping, timely and accurate accident reporting, issuance of certification cards, and the facilitation of information exchange with the Division Directors or designees, HR and Trainers.
- B-3. Division Directors or designees, Supervisors and Trainers may, at their discretion, deny or revoke chainsaw certification and/or recertification of an Operator at any time.

- B-4. The Chainsaw Trainer (“Trainer”) will certify Operators at a level commensurate with the Operator’s demonstrated training and ability as described in this Policy. The Trainer is authorized to:
- B-6.1. Impose time, project, or size limitations to determine an Operator’s ability.
 - B-6.2. Certify or recertify the Operator at the appropriate sawyer class level, document the Operator’s skill level and certification, and provide a copy of the Operator’s certification to HR for inclusion in the employee’s personnel file.
 - B-6.3. Deny, fail, and/or revoke, at their discretion, chainsaw certification and/or recertification of an employee or Operator at any time.
- B-5. Operators shall obtain and maintain the appropriate training and certification, as approved by their Supervisor, for the tasks they are expected to perform.
- B-6. Operators shall, at all times, use the proper equipment and required PPE when operating a chainsaw and shall inspect their PPE prior to each use. Failure to comply with this Policy and program procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.
- B-7. Operators, in performance of their duties, shall comply with the standards set forth in this Policy as a condition of employment. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in the revocation of the Operator’s chainsaw certification and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.
- B-8. Operators, in performance of their duties, shall wear and maintain their PPE, and operate chainsaws **ONLY** within the scope of their duties and certification level. The ultimate responsibility for personal safety rests with the Operator. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in the revocation of the Operator’s chainsaw certification and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.
- B-9. Any Operator who finds that a piece of equipment is missing safety guards or has nonfunctioning safety features must immediately remove the equipment from use and notify their Supervisor.
- B-10. Operators shall have a duty to monitor their individual work zone at all times to ensure the safe use of chainsaws, including the proper equipment and PPE; and shall make all necessary and immediate corrective actions; and shall submit timely accident reporting when an incident occurs.
- B-11. Operators shall have a duty to monitor at all times the work zone while part of a group of Operators to ensure the safe use of chainsaws, including the proper equipment and PPE. Operators shall make all necessary and immediate corrective actions to ensure the safe use of chainsaws by all Operators in the work zone. Operators shall have a duty to immediately report to the Supervisor any Operator who does not take all necessary and immediate corrective actions and is not in compliance with this Policy and the safe use of chainsaws, including proper equipment and PPE.
- B-12. All Operators have the right to refuse an assigned task which they deem to be beyond their ability, training, or certification level.
- B-13. No Operator with Basic Sawyer certification shall operate a chainsaw alone.
- B-14. Operators with Intermediate and Advance Sawyer certification may operate a chainsaw alone on a case-by-case basis only with the approval of the Division Director or designee, or Supervisor. Bureau of Trails Operators certified and approved to operate a chainsaw alone by their Supervisor shall follow

the most current “Trails Bureau: Emergency Response Working Alone Procedures” (currently March 21, 2016).

B-15. No Operator shall fell trees located within two (2) tree lengths of utility lines, except for Advanced Sawyers specifically certified for such specialized work **and** approved by the respective Division Director or designee.

B-16. No Operator shall climb trees and use a chainsaw, except for Advanced Sawyers specifically certified for such specialized work **and** approved by the respective Division Director or designee.

B-17. An Operator’s failure to follow the Policy safety standards that results in the endangering of oneself and/or others while operating a chainsaw shall result in immediate disciplinary action, including termination from employment.

C. CHAINSAW POLICY PROCEDURES & IMPLEMENTATION

I. Chainsaw Training and Certification Procedures.

This section describes chainsaw training that is based upon complexity and skill, chainsaw certification and sawyer levels, and procedures for certification and re-certification.

A. Levels of Certification & Specialty – All chainsaw training shall ensure that Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced ratings are achieved by the successful demonstration of skills based on the complexity of materials being cut. *The complexity of the material to be cut, not the diameter, determines the skill level required to safely complete a sawing task.* Complexity is determined by evaluating the amount of material, topography, stability, proper equipment, personal experience, and any other factors that will affect the saw operation. There are three levels of complexity:

1. **Basic Sawyer** involves low complexity cutting of downed debris that is not under pressure or strain. No cutting within two (2) tree lengths of structures or power lines. Basic saw operators using saws for bucking are limited to low cutting/sawing complexity as outlined in the *Safe Timber Harvesting* handbook prepared by UNH Cooperative Extension, Spring 2001, as amended. Certification is primarily limited to brushing and bucking activities. Minimum training requirements consists of instruction, rescue and self-rescue procedures, and field examination, including classroom discussion on DNCR Policy and procedures. Additional field training will be determined by the Certifier based on the previous experience and field examination of the trainee.
2. **Intermediate Sawyer** involves moderate complexity in the felling of small trees of 12-inch diameter or less, whether alive or dead. No cutting within two (2) tree lengths of structures or power lines. Intermediate saw operator certification includes skills in felling, bucking, and brush cutting of materials of moderate cutting/sawing complexity as outlined in the *Safe Timber Harvesting* handbook prepared by UNH Cooperative Extension, Spring 2001, as amended. Minimum training requirements consists of instruction, rescue and self-rescue procedures, and field examination, including classroom discussion on DNCR Policy and procedures. Additional field training will be determined by the Certifier based on the previous experience and field examination of the trainee.
3. **Advanced Sawyer** involves advanced complexity in the felling of trees greater than 12-inch diameter; the felling of leaners, dead trees, and cracked trees; and cutting within two (2) tree lengths of structures; and additional specialized module training, as needed. Advanced Sawyers can elect advance training modules for specialized work as a Generalist, Electrical specialist, Crew

Boss, and/or Trainer. Advanced saw operator certification includes one's working ability in felling, bucking, and brushing of materials of high cutting/sawing complexity as outlined in the *Safe Timber Harvesting* handbook prepared by UNH Cooperative Extension, Spring 2001, as amended. Minimum training requirements consists of instruction, rescue and self-rescue procedures, and field examination, including classroom discussion on DNCR Policy and procedures. Additional field training will be determined by the Certifier based on the previous experience and field examination of the trainee. Areas of specialization for the Advanced Sawyer are:

- a. **"Generalist"** certified in the felling of trees greater than 12-inch diameter; the felling of leaners, dead trees, and cracked trees; and cutting within two (2) tree lengths of structures. No cutting within two (2) tree lengths of power lines.
- b. **"Electrical"** specializing in the felling of trees within two (2) tree lengths of power lines.
- c. **"Crew Boss"** specializing in the supervision of a crew of chainsaw Operators.
- d. **"Trainer"** (Expert) specializing in the training, certification and recertification of chainsaw Operators. Trainer sawyer certification includes one's working ability in felling, bucking, and brushing of materials of high cutting/sawing complexity as outlined in *Safe Timber Harvesting* handbook prepared by UNH Cooperative Extension, Spring 2001, as amended. Trainers have demonstrated effective communication skills, the ability to transfer and relate critical concepts to others, and maintain knowledge of this Policy and general policies and regulations pertaining to the use and operation of saws and related equipment. Candidates must be recommended by their Supervisors to become certified as a Trainer.

The following training programs shall serve as acceptable certification for the minimum requirements as a Basic Sawyer. Certification must be up-to-date and proof of certification must be on file with HR.

- S-212 Wildland Fire Chain Saws for fire operations
 - Game of Logging Chainsaw Safety Training – Levels 1 and 2
 - New Hampshire Certified Professional Loggers Program
 - NH Arborists Association's Certified/Int'l Society of Arboriculture Chainsaw Specialist, or
 - Other training programs deemed appropriate by the Division Director or designee.
- B. Certification – Certifications are valid for three (3) years for each class of sawyer: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced including any areas of specialization. The Trainer will document the Operator's skill level and certification.
- C. Recertification
1. Shall be required at least every three (3) years from issue date of the Certification for all class levels of chainsaw operation.
 2. Recertification shall consist of following:
 - a. Each Operator must have successfully demonstrated their current sawyer class certification skill level to the satisfaction of the Trainer.

- b. New techniques, equipment, job hazard analysis, lessons learned, and field exercise demonstrating sawyer proficiency.
 - c. Discussion of current DNCR Policy and other administrative requirements.
3. The Trainer shall have the authority to certify or recertify the Operator at the appropriate sawyer class level. The Trainer will document the Operator's skill level and certification, and shall provide a copy of certification to HR for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

II. Equipment.

- A. DNCR recommends the use of only gas-powered chainsaws and gas-powered pole-pruners. This Policy applies to the use of gas-powered devices that saw, prune, and trim.
- B. Operators shall be permitted to use their own chainsaws on DNCR reservations, but the saw must be inspected by a Supervisor to have the **five safety features**, below.

Operators choosing to use their own equipment (chainsaw and/or PPE) shall take fiscal responsibility for any damage to their equipment, independent of cause. Operators choosing to use their own equipment (chainsaw and/or PPE) shall be liable for any harm to himself/herself, harm to others, and/or damage to property, due to the malfunction of the Operator's own equipment.

- C. ALL chainsaws used by Operators while on DNCR property shall meet manufacturer's specifications and shall be in working order and have the following **five safety features**:
 - 1. Working chain break
 - 2. Rear hand guard
 - 3. Throttle interlock system
 - 4. Chain catch peg, pin or stud
 - 5. Anti-vibration/insulation mounts
- D. Chainsaw equipment shall meet or exceed applicable safety standards set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and American National Standards Institute (ANSI), as amended.

III. Minimum Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

- A. Required:
 - 1. Head
 - a. Hard hat conforming to ANSI # Z89.1 and is functional sound.
 - b. Eye protection/face-screen conforming to OSHA 29CFR 1910.266(d)(1)(vii) and/or eye protection conforming to ANSI Standard # Z87.1 or higher, or both. Based upon certain working environments, the supervisor may require both eye protection and face-screen protection.
 - c. Ear protection conforming to ANSI Standard # Z133 3.4.8
 - 2. Leg
 - a. Long pants
 - b. Cut resistant chaps/pants that extend from waist to top of boot

3. Foot
 - a. Non-skid boots with lug soles or caulks that provides ankle support, with steel- or composite-toe protection.
 - b. For certain Advanced Sawyers specifically certified for certain specialized work and approved by the respective Division's Director or designee, boots as appropriate for specific situations, such as for forest fire fighting or tree climbing.
 4. Hand, when using any type of winch with wire rope/cable, including but not limited to a hand-powered winch.
 - a. Leather gloves, required.
 5. OSHA First-aid Kit (mandatory), pursuant to OSHA Standard No. 1910.266 Appendix A for Logging Operations. Refer to OSHA 29 CFR Part 1910, Logging Operations, effective September 8, 1995, or as amended.
- B. Recommended:
1. Other
 - a. Safety eyewear
 - b. Gloves
 - c. Long-sleeved shirt
 - d. Reflective, or high visibility attire
- C. PPEs shall meet or exceed applicable safety standards set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and American National Standards Institute (ANSI), as amended.
- D. Any exceptions or deviations from any required PPE shall require approval from the appropriate Division Director or designee.
- E. Operators choosing to use their own equipment (chainsaw and/or PPE) shall take fiscal responsibility for any damage to their equipment independent of cause.
- F. All PPEs shall be inspected at least annually by the Operator's Supervisor or manager.

IV. Reporting Requirements and Information Exchange.

- A. Accident Reports. Operators shall report any and all chainsaw related injuries and accidents to their Supervisor or manager immediately, in accordance with DNCR Policy #36, Employee Health and Safety.
- B. Chainsaw Training Report. Chainsaw Trainers will file a Chainsaw Training Report to the Supervisors, to include:
 1. Names of employees who attended the training
 2. Dates of training
 3. Certification Levels achieved by each employee
 4. Dates of required re-certification for each certified Operator
 5. Or, "FAILURE TO PASS TRAINING"

C. Training & Certified Operators Report. Supervisors will file a Training & Certified Operators Report to HR, to include:

1. Name of employee and his/her Division & Bureau, who attended the training
2. Date of training
3. Certification Level achieved
4. Date of required re-certification
5. Or, "FAILURE TO PASS TRAINING"

D. Information Exchange. Supervisors and Trainers will meet periodically for the purpose of:

1. Exchange of information related to Chainsaw operations
2. Recommendations for revisions to the Policy and/or program procedures
3. Review of accidents and incidents
4. Recommendations for reducing accidents and incidents, as provided by the DNCR Safety Committee

The DNCR Safety Committee Chairperson or designee shall attend the meetings.

E. Management Feedback to Supervisors and Trainers

1. HR shall immediately inform the Operator's Supervisor of any and all chainsaw related injuries and accidents, so as to enable the Supervisor to take corrective action(s) in a timely manner for the health and safety of Operators.
2. Division Directors or designees feedback, as needed.
3. DNCR Safety Committee feedback, as needed.

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.