

TREE FALLING SAFETY



Details

Workplace Standards Tasmania inspectors recently inspected the work practices of 17 tree fallers around Tasmania.

All tree fallers inspected held a Tasmanian Forest Industries Training Board Inc Tree Fallers Licence.

Of the 17 tree fallers inspected, 10 were using incorrect tree falling work practices (several had been using these incorrect practices for sometime) and defective equipment.

Contributing factors

Some of the incorrect tree falling work practices and defective equipment identified included:

- incorrect placement of scarf cuts (undercutting of the top cut)
- inadequate holding wood (cutting trees off the stump)
- incorrect placement of the back cut
- failure to fall hazardous trees in progression with the falling operation.
- failure by tree fallers to maintain a safe working distance between two tree falling operations
- unsafe wedges (containing mushroomed heads and broken plastic wedges)
- chainsaw chains not maintained in accordance with manufacturers' specifications (depth gauges filed too low).

These put the tree fallers' own safety and the safety of other workers at risk.

Recommendations

- Tree fallers must use correct tree falling work practices at all times.
- Tree fallers must maintain and use all equipment in accordance with the manufacturers'/ suppliers' specifications.
- Principal employers must ensure the harvesting contractor is operating in a manner that complies with the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.
- Harvesting contractors must ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, everyone at the workplace is safe from injury and risk to health.

Workplace Standards Tasmania inspectors will take action to ensure that the use of incorrect work practices or defective equipment is stopped. Inspectors may take action on any one or all of the following people:

- the tree faller
- the person in charge of the workplace
- the harvesting contractor or the principal employer.

If you would like further information contact Workplace Standards Tasmania on:
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