

**North Carolina Department of Labor  
Division of Occupational Safety and Health**

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

Field Information System

Operational Procedure Notice 88F

**Subject:** Special Emphasis Program, Tree Felling and Related Activity

**A. Purpose.**

This notice reestablishes a Special Emphasis Program (SEP) to address the hazards associated with logging, tree harvesting, and other tree care/trimming, or tree removal operations. This effort will include safety inspections, specific consultation and education/training activities.

**B. Scope.**

Logging activity includes limbing, bucking, marking, and cutting logs to length as well as tree felling operations. Other operations covered by this Operational Procedure Notice (OPN) include, but are not limited to tree trimming, felling of trees in preparation for the construction of roads or structures, clearing for agricultural activity, saw milling, and storm debris cleanup and removal. Industries covered by this OPN include, but are not limited to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes 0783, 1500-1799, 2411, 2421, and codes representing the public sector. This SEP is in effect throughout North Carolina.

**C. Action.**

This Operational Procedure Notice provides for special emphasis inspections in accordance with GS 95-136.1(b)(2) due to a high rate of work-related deaths.

**D. Background.**

The North Carolina Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSHNC) initiated the state's first special emphasis inspection program for tree felling operations in 1994 in response to an increasing number of fatalities and serious injuries associated with tree felling and related activity. Through consultation, education and training and compliance activity, the SEP had a significant impact on reducing the number of fatalities relating to tree felling. In 1993, the state experienced 13 fatalities in tree felling operations, while the number dropped to only three deaths in 1994. The special emphasis program was not extended beyond 1995. During 1996 and 1997, the number of tree felling fatalities increased to a level near that of 1993. In 1996, there were 12 fatalities and 11 in 1997. In response to the increasing number of fatalities during these two years, the tree felling SEP has been resumed as of June, 1998. This SEP will also address activity associated with continuing storm cleanup projects. Part of the SEP educational process will be to make public sector employers aware that subcontractors hired for storm cleanup involving tree felling and related activity are covered under applicable OSHA standards, such as logging and utility line clearance tree trimming.

**E. Expiration.**

OPN 88E is canceled. OPN 88F will remain in effect until revised or canceled by the Director.

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F. **Training and Consultative Activity.**

The Bureaus of Education Training and Technical Assistance, and Consultative Services will provide training and consultative efforts in support of this SEP consistent with the specific tasks included in OSHNC's Strategic Plan. Consultative services will evaluate both equipment and procedures to establish a work site safety program. During this inspection the employer will be protected from a general compliance inspection while the consultant is working with the employer.

G. **Compliance Inspection Activity.**

Each district office will conduct inspections in support of this SEP.

1. **Referrals.**

- a. In consideration of the mobile and fleeting nature of tree felling operations, any serious hazards observed should normally be investigated immediately by the compliance officer who observes the activity, after consulting with the District Supervisor. Serious safety hazards observed by other individuals shall be referred to the applicable compliance supervisor.
- b. Because many tree felling operations are located in remote locations where the observation of hazards from public areas would not be possible, whenever a compliance officer observes or receives information regarding a site where tree felling may be taking place but no violation is observed, the compliance officer and the District Supervisor should determine if the site should be immediately inspected. Such determination shall be based on but not limited to the following criteria: the resources available for inspecting the site, the size of the operation, the prior history of the operator if known.
- c. For tree felling operations associated with storm cleanup, the compliance bureau chief or supervisor may request searches be conducted to locate the cleanup sites. This could include contact with public sector organizations.

H. **IMIS Coding.**

The OSHA-1 form for all inspections conducted as a result of this special emphasis program shall be coded as local emphasis program inspections in block 25C and marked "LOGGING".

I. **Applicable Standards.**

In addition to the General Duty clause and other OSHA standards that may apply, there are several specific OSHA and consensus standards which are applicable to the various industries addressed in this OPN. Included in the consensus standards are ANSI Z 133.1 for tree care operations, and ANSI B 175.1 for chain saw safety. Additional activities and the applicable standards are listed below:

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1. Logging Operations.

Operations associated with felling and moving trees and logs from the stump to the point of delivery regardless of the end use of the wood are covered by 29 CFR 1910.266, logging operations. Employers covered by this standard include but are not limited to loggers and construction companies clearing construction sites.

2. Utility line-clearance tree-trimming.

A major portion of the arborist industry is involved in utility line-clearance tree-trimming operations, whereby employees are using arborist techniques to clear trees and brush from utility line right-of-ways. Employers involved in this activity include but are not limited to power generation companies, companies which are under contract for the service, and municipalities which maintain their own distribution lines. The applicable standards for these employers are:

- a. Utility line-clearance tree-trimming operations performed by qualified employees are covered by 1910.269 as described by 1910.269(a)(1)(i)(E)(1).
- b. Utility line-clearance tree-trimming operations performed by line-clearance tree trimmers who are not qualified employees are covered by 1910.269 as described by 1910.269(a)(1)(i)(E)(2).

4. Other Industries included in the table below:

- a. Construction companies removing trees for the purpose of clearing land for construction projects.
- b. Construction companies employing the incidental use of chain saws.
- c.. Saw mill operators employing the incidental use of chain saws.

**Recommended Citation References \***

<b>Activity/ Hazard</b>	<b>Construction</b>	<b>Sawmills</b>	<b>Public Sector **</b>
Logging Operations	1910.266	N/A	1910.266
Line Clearance Tree Trimming	1910.269	N/A	1910.269
Chainsaw Safety on the ground	General Duty	General Duty	General Duty
Chainsaw Safety in a bucket	N/A	N/A	General Duty
Chainsaw Safety in a tree	N/A	N/A	General Duty
PPE with Chainsaw on the ground	1926.28; or 1926 Subpart E	1910 Subpart I	1910 Subpart I
PPE with Chainsaw in a bucket	N/A	N/A	1910 Subpart I
PPE with Chainsaw in a tree	N/A	N/A	1910 Subpart I
General PPE on the ground	1926.28; or 1926 Subpart E	1910 Subpart I	1910 Subpart I
General PPE in a bucket	N/A	N/A	1910.67; or 1910 Subpart I
General PPE in a tree	N/A	N/A	1910 Subpart I General Duty

- Employers in SIC Code 2411 engaged in logging operations are covered primarily under 1910.266.
- For employers in SIC 0783 – see CPL 02-01-045 for inspection guidance
- Includes private-sector employers working under contract for public sector.

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J. **Evaluation of Program.**

Bureau Chiefs affected by this special emphasis program will submit to the Director monthly, an evaluation report to include at least the following:

1. Bureau Chief of Compliance:

- a. Number of inspections.
- b. Number of citations and violations issued.
- c. Impact on the number of fatalities in tree felling activities.
- d. Standards cited.
- e. Scheduling problems, such as locating work sites or establishments for this special emphasis program.
- f. Number of safety and health programs improved or implemented.
- g. Overall assessment of this special emphasis program, including the impact on other Bureau activities, and the goal of eliminating hazards associated with tree felling.
- h. Standard promulgation recommendations.

2. Bureau Chief of Consultative Services:

- a. Description of outreach efforts implemented.
- b. Assessment of the impact of outreach efforts.
- c. Number of employers and employees affected.
- d. Number of consultative visits conducted.
- e. Types of hazards observed.
- f. Number of safety and health programs improved or implemented.
- g. Standard Promulgation recommendations.

3. Bureau Chief of Education Training and Technical Assistance:

- a. Description of outreach efforts implemented.
- b. Assessment of the impact of outreach efforts.
- c. Number of training sessions conducted.
- d. Number of employers and employees affected.
- e. Standard promulgation recommendations.
- f. Number of safety and health programs improved or implemented.

Signed on Original  
Leighton Dowdle  
SEP Team Leader

Signed on Original  
Allen McNeely  
Director

3/17/2009  
Date of Signature