

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

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

Field Information System

Operational Procedure Notice 88I

***Subject:*** Special Emphasis Program for Logging and Arboriculture

**A. Purpose and Scope.**

This Operational Procedure Notice (OPN) establishes a Special Emphasis Program (SEP) to address the hazards associated with logging, tree harvesting, tree removal operations and arboricultural operations. This effort will include consultation efforts, education/training activities and safety inspections.

Industries covered by this OPN include, but are not limited to industries in North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) Codes 1133 – Logging, 238910 – Site Preparation Contractors, 561730 – Landscaping Services, and codes representing the public sector.

**B. Action.**

This OPN provides for special emphasis inspections in accordance with North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 95-136.1(b)(2) due to a high rate of work-related deaths. Compliance Safety and Health Officers (CSHOs) will use this OPN when conducting logging or arboriculture inspections related to tree felling and other related activity. This SEP is in effect throughout North Carolina.

**C. Background.**

The North Carolina Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSH) initiated the state's first SEP 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/training and compliance activity, the SEP had a significant impact on reducing the number of fatalities relating to tree felling. Statistical data for the years 2013-2017 indicate a continued need for this SEP. During this time, there were 23 total fatalities with 13 fatalities related to arboricultural activities and ten fatalities in the logging industry.

**D. Consultative and Training Activity.**

The Consultative Services Bureau and Education, Training and Technical Assistance Bureau will provide consultative and training efforts in support of this SEP, consistent with the specific tasks included in OSH's Strategic Management Plan. The Consultative Services Bureau will evaluate both equipment and procedures to establish a worksite safety program. If the Consultative Services Bureau is performing a consultative survey or if the worksite is a Safety and Health Achievement and Recognition Programs (SHARP) logging site, the site may have a temporary deferral from programmed compliance activity as described in Field Operations Manual (FOM) Chapter II – Compliance Programming and Chapter III – Inspection Procedures.

E. **Compliance Inspection Activity.**

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

1. **Inspection Activity.**

- a. **Unprogrammed Inspections.** Any unprogrammed activity including fatalities/catastrophes, complaints, referrals (for self-referrals, see paragraph E.1.b. below) begin as partial scope inspections. CSHOs will refer to FOM Chapter VIII - Fatality and Catastrophe Investigations and FOM Chapter IX - Complaints, Referrals, and Accidents for additional information regarding SEP inspection scope and possible scope expansion.
- b. **Programmed Planned Inspections.** Self-referral (drive-by) inspections will be classified as programmed planned inspections per the definition of programmed planned inspections found in FOM Chapter II - Compliance Programming, paragraph B. 1. - Inspection/Investigation Types. Programmed planned inspections will begin as comprehensive in scope. Since self-referrals are programmed planned inspections, no referral worksheet (Referral Report) will be completed. However, CSHOs must document the circumstances surrounding the self-referral in the narrative.
  - i. In consideration of the high injury and fatality rate and the mobile and fleeting nature of tree felling operations, any serious hazards observed should normally be investigated immediately by the CSHO 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.
  - ii. Many tree felling operations are located in remote locations where the observation of hazards from public areas would not be possible. Whenever a CSHO observes or receives information regarding a site where tree felling may be taking place, but no violation is observed, the CSHO 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 and the prior history of the operator, if known.
  - iii. 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.

F. **Coding.**

Inspections conducted as a result of this SEP which are determined to be logging activities shall be coded in the Emphasis/Initiatives tab within OSHA Express (OE) as local emphasis program (LEP) inspections and marked "LOGGING." In addition, CSHOs will enter "TREE FELLING" in the strategic plan activity description field.

For those inspections covering arboriculture activities, CSHOs will only enter “TREE FELLING” in the strategic plan activity description field. Descriptions/definitions which assist in determining logging and arboriculture activities are found in paragraph G, below, and in CPL 02-01-045 – Citation Guidance Related to Tree Care and Tree Removal Operations.

G. **Citation Guidance.**

Tree removal operations may be completed by employees in a variety of industries including, but not limited to, logging, arboriculture and construction. As a result, CSHOs must evaluate the type of work being performed before determining which standards apply. Clarification about what constitutes activities in logging, arboriculture, and construction can be found in a brief overview below and in more detail in the following guidance documents. CSHOs must also review the guidance documents when determining the applicable standards.

- CPL 02-01-045 – Citation Guidance Related to Tree Care and Tree Removal Operations
- OPN 147 – Logging Operations, Inspection Procedures and Interpretive Guidance

1. **Logging Operations.**

Logging operations, as covered by 29 CFR 1910.266, are defined within the scope and definitions of the standard and further clarified through the guidance documents listed above. Excerpts from these sources include the following descriptions of what constitutes logging.

From 29 CFR 1910.266(b)(1): “This standard establishes safety practices, means, methods and operations for all types of logging, regardless of the end use of the wood. These types of logging include, but are not limited to pulpwood and timber harvesting and the logging of sawlogs, veneer bolts, poles, pilings and other forest products. This standard does not cover the construction or use of cable yarding systems.”

From OPN 147, Scope and Application: “Logging operations include, but are not limited to, the operations of marking (i.e., marking danger trees in areas being harvested and marking felled trees to be cut to length), debarking, yarding, chipping, felling, limbing, bucking, loading and unloading equipment and personnel to, from and between logging sites and other operations associated with felling trees and moving logs from the stump to the point of delivery. The standard does not cover the construction or use of cable yarding systems or the construction of roads or trails to logging sites.”

Citation guidance for logging operations can be found in CPL 02-01-045 and OPN 147.

2. **Arboricultural Operations.**

Arboriculture operations include, but are not limited to, pruning, repairing, maintaining, and removing trees; cutting brush; and for using equipment in such operations.

Significant discussion on whether certain tree-removal activities fall under the scope of the logging standard or other general industry standards can be found in CPL 02-01-045. CSHOs should review this compliance directive when determining if the activities fall under arboriculture or logging operations.

A major portion of the arboriculture industry is involved in utility line-clearance tree-

trimming operations, whereby employees are using arboricultural 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 standard 29 CFR 1910.269 – Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution, provides definitions related to line clearance tree trimming, line clearance tree trimmers and lists requirements for line-clearance tree-trimming operations and for equipment used in these operations.

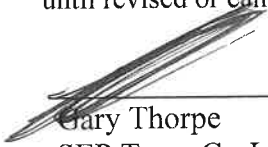
Citation guidance for arboriculture operations can be found in Appendix A.

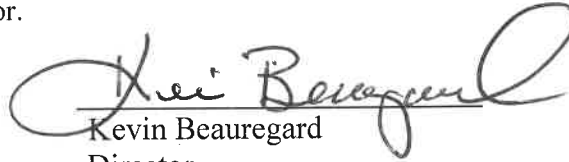
3. Construction Operations.

Construction companies also perform activities related to tree removal, including site clearing and the incidental use of chainsaws. Significant discussion on whether certain site clearing activities fall under the scope of the logging standard or other construction industry standards can be found in CPL 02-01-045. CSHOs should review this compliance directive when determining if the activities fall under construction or logging operations.

H. Effective Date.

OPN 88H is canceled. This OPN is effective on the date of signature. It will remain in effect until revised or canceled by the director.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Thorpe  
SEP Team Co-Leader

  
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Kevin Beauregard  
Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

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**Appendix A: Recommended Standards for Arboricultural Operations**

<b>Selected Hazards</b>	<b>Applicable Standards</b>
Line clearance tree trimming	1910.269
Chainsaw Safety (in a bucket, on the ground, in a tree)	General Duty (ANSI B 175.1)
Personal protective equipment (PPE) with chainsaw (in a bucket, on the ground, in a tree)	1910 Subpart I
General PPE on the ground	1910 Subpart I
General PPE in a bucket	1910.67 or 1910 Subpart I
General PPE in a tree	General Duty or 1910 Subpart I