

Tree lopping and gardening services checklist

Scope

This checklist is a tool to assist duty holders and persons conducting a business or undertaking including arborists, tree climbers, horticulturalists, gardeners, tree workers, landscapers, and others involved in the amenity (non-production) tree industry to manage their duties under work health and safety (WHS) laws. It highlights relevant considerations for these tasks but does not cover all WHS requirements.

Guide to managing risks of tree trimming and removal work

Safe Work Australia has published a [Guide to managing risks of tree trimming and removal work](#) which provides practical information on how to manage risks associated with tree trimming and removal.

Checklist for tree lopping and gardening services

WHS management	
Consultation takes place on WHS matters between management and workers.	
Hazard and injury reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systems are in place for reporting hazards and injuries • reported hazards and injuries have been investigated • systems are in place for reporting notifiable injuries to WorkSafe 	
In relation to all tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hazards have been identified • the risk of injury has been assessed • control measures have been implemented so far as is reasonably practicable • control measures are regularly reviewed 	
Safe operating procedures have been developed and implemented, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency procedures are understood • mobile or other means of communication is available 	
Workers have received adequate safety induction and task specific training in relation to WHS	
A WHS management system (e.g. WorkSafe Plan) has been implemented, including elements such as management commitment, safety planning, consultation and reporting, hazard management and training and consultation (<i>good practice – not mandatory</i>)	
Health and safety representatives have been elected as per WHS Act if requested by a worker	
Health and safety representatives have been trained as per the legislation	
A health and safety committee is in place if requested	

General safety	
The crew have identified general and site-specific hazards and assessed associated risks	
<p>The most suitable method of accessing a tree has been identified (e.g. EWP, tree climbing, use of other plant), with consideration of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • condition, soundness and stability of tree • crown/shape and weight distribution • nature of terrain • proximity to overhead powerlines • weather forecast • location of other workers and equipment 	
Workers are fit for duty	
Persons are trained on required emergency techniques, e.g. aerial rescue	
Fire fighting equipment is provided, tested and maintained	
<p>A rescue kit is available – depending on the type of emergency that may occur, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climbing harness • carabiners (if used with climbing ropes or safety straps, must have at least three distinct actions to open) • lifeline • pole belt • prusik knots • climbing spikes • soft rope – synthetic – minimum breaking load 20kN • first aid kit • micro pulleys • redirect slings • pocket knife with lanyard <p>All hardware for life support or rigging must be load rated</p>	

Traffic management	
Adequate traffic management measures are in place to protect workers, motorists, cyclists and pedestrians	
Establish a safe area or exclusion zone to ensure that people not involved in the tree felling operation do not enter the area	
When roads and other public accessways fall within a two tree length separation distance, road traffic and pedestrians must be prevented from entering the designated exclusion zone. Temporary road closures, diversions or traffic control may be required	
<p>In areas of high public access (e.g. near schools, shopping centres) additional controls should be used, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barrier tape • barricades • extra persons <p>traffic management plan in place</p>	

Elevating work platforms (EWPs)	
<p>Correct EWP selected for the task, considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance with AS/NZS 1418.10 Cranes, hoists and winches – Elevating work platforms • insulation requirements (electrical test certificate within 6 months) • ground conditions • height and reach <p>type of work to be done</p>	
Operator has carried out a documented pre-operational inspection of the EWP prior to starting	
<p>EWP logbook has been referred to</p> <p>If EWP has any faults or safety issues recorded have they been assessed by a competent person before EWP was put back in service</p>	
Operator manual is available for the EWP	
EWP basket is safely accessible	
<p>Ground surface conditions checked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when fitted, stabilisers or outriggers are positioned before raising the platform 	
Planning, risk assessment or job safety analysis has been done to ensure the EWP is kept a safe distance from power lines, pedestrians or vehicle traffic	
Safety spotter (observer) available	
Operators keep both feet flat on the floor of the basket	
If there is a need to climb into a tree, the climber is wearing a harness suitable for tree climbing and is attached to the tree on a tested anchor point, before releasing the anchor in the basket	
EWP is operated according to manufacturer's instructions	
<p>Self-propelled EWP's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not driven with the basket elevated (unless set in low speed) • are not driven over gutters, curbs, sloping driveways. 	
EWP is not used to lower objects	

Tree climbing	
Before climbing, the tree is inspected by a competent person to determine suitability, precautions or special techniques required	
Minimum of two persons are present – one climber and one ground person who is able to climb and is trained in aerial rescue	
Regular visual and/or verbal communication is maintained between the climber and the ground person	
Climbing rope should only be passed around healthy, sound and suitably strong anchor points	
<p>Climber has access to the climbing rope at all times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rope is kept taut at all times 	
All points of attachment are correctly set and visually inspected before placing weight on them	
All climbing equipment is checked daily (prior to first use and periodically throughout the day)	

Wood chippers	
An adequate number of emergency stops are installed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency stops are regularly checked to ensure they are working 	
Hot parts and nip points are adequately guarded	
Operators are trained and competent	
The operator is situated to the side of infeed chute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tree waste is fed into the chute butt end first 	
Operator does not wear loose clothing, jewellery, rings or a watch	
Operator does not work alone	

Chainsaws	
Operator is trained and competent to use a chainsaw	
Chainsaw is checked before use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bar, chain and sprockets are in good condition • bar oil is flowing • chain brake is working • chain is sharp 	
Chainsaw has been sharpened, tensioned in accordance with manufacturer's requirements	
Chainsaw is not used to cut anything above shoulder height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two hands are used to operate the chainsaw 	
The chainsaw is started close to the working position, ensuring the chain is clear of the operator	
Sharpening, refuelling or maintenance is conducted out of the tree	
Bystanders, other persons and animals are kept away when starting and using the chainsaw	

Use of other powered mobile plant	
Powered mobile plant such as excavators or bulldozers are only used to push trees if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have the capacity, height and reach to push the tree safely • are fitted with an operator protective structure • are able to safely control the fall direction of the tree 	

Stump grinders	
Underground services have been identified	
Exclusion zone set up	
Loose rocks, pipes, or debris identified/moved	
Guards and debris curtains are in place	
Cutting wheel is sharp	
Emergency stop is working	
Pre-start check done	

Hazardous chemicals	
Current safety data sheets are readily available (SDS not older than 5 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hazardous chemicals register is available to workers 	
Chemicals are correctly labelled (including items decanted from manufacturer's container)	
No ignition sources are introduced into a hazardous area	
Persons using hazardous chemicals are competent and have had adequate training, information and instruction	

Personal protective equipment (PPE)	
PPE is provided where necessary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eye protection • hearing protection • safety helmets • safety harness • safety boots • gloves • high visibility vest • leg protection (cut resistant trousers or chaps as preferred) 	
PPE is maintained and is in good working order	
Sunscreen and protective clothing are provided for sun protection	

Electricity and overhead powerlines	
Prior to commencing vegetation management work near live overhead power lines, a hazard identification and risk assessment have been carried out and adequate control measures have been determined – refer to the Building and Energy Code of Practice for personnel safety for vegetation control near live power lines	
Identify the voltage and type of power line	
Where this is not possible obtain further information from the network operator	
Persons, plant, or things do not enter the danger zone of an overhead powerline	
Adequate systems for vegetation control work in the vicinity of overhead powerlines are in place	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a ground worker is on site and has received on-site training • a spotter and trained vegetation worker are on site and are trained • insulated tools and equipment are in place (tools are regularly tested by a competent person) 	
The chassis of the EWP is connected to earth by a rated electrical cable and metal earthing spike, which should be driven 600mm into the ground, where practical	
Electrical equipment supplied with electricity through an electrical socket is tested by a competent person	
Provide and maintain insulated tools and equipment – designed, tested and approved specifically for work near overhead powerlines	
Ladders with insulated properties are provided for working near live overhead power lines	
Competency-based training has been conducted for workers undertaking vegetation management	
Metal objects such as hanging jewellery is removed before commencing work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long hair and beards have been secured 	
Safe work procedure, based on a risk assessment is available to workers for the duration of the work	