# Logging Safety Meeting Kit




Logging workers deal with a set of working conditions unique among all other occupations. Logging jobs are characterized by strenuous work, long hours, seasonal employment, and some of the most hazardous conditions in the workforce. Loggers often work many hours at remote locations in harsh weather conditions.

**LOGGERS MUST KNOW SPECIFIC HAZARDS PRIOR TO FIRST CUT**

- **The species of the tree or trees being cut;** Weight and density of trees vary by species. Both have a big impact on how hard it will be to cut the tree, the rigging system to be used, the force needed to pull the tree to the ground, and whether it can be an anchor point.
- **The location of escape routes:** Establish clear routes employees will take in case something goes wrong. Depending on where each worker is stationed, multiple routes may be necessary. Make sure each one is clear of obstacles and poses no hazard or conflict to other escape routes.
- **The location of the drop zone:** The drop zone is where the tree will fall. The drop zone should be at least two times the size of the tree to be cut and must be clear of any obstacles. Only employees directly involved in the cut may be allowed within the drop zone until the qualified tree worker has determined that it is safe.
- **How to guide the tree into the drop zone**: Using a chainsaw to cut the tree is just one part of the job. Your workers also must make sure the tree falls safely into the drop zone. Rope can be used to pull a tree in the desired direction after the cut. A rigging or pulley system—when used in connection with an anchor point—can also be used. The pulley system must be selected by a qualified tree worker.
- **Always work in teams:** Bringing down a tree is not a one-person job. Coworkers serve as extra eyes and ears to help alert the saw operator of any danger. They also help manipulate ropes or the rigging system used to guide the tree safely to the ground.
- **Making the proper cuts:** To safely cut down a tree, three precise cuts are needed to help ensure the tree falls in the intended direction.

**BEST LOGGING SAFETY PRACTICES**

1. **Priority (Safety is Job #1).** Demonstrate a genuine and consistent concern for safety so employees know logging safety is the firm’s number one priority. Lead by example. Never bend the rules.

2. **Train Employees.** Prepare a written safety program. Train and closely monitor new employees during their first year on the job; they are the employees most likely to suffer an injury. Hold regular safety meetings to discuss OSHA regulations, incidents and close calls, and employee suggestions for safe work habits. Obtain First Aid and CPR training.
3. **Wear Personal Protective Equipment.** Get in the habit of wearing all appropriate personal protective equipment. It may save lives, or prevent serious injury. OSHA requires at a minimum: hard hats, eye protection, hearing protection, and foot protection for all woods workers. Chain saw operators must wear cut resistant leg protection and logging boots. Equipment operators should wear seat belts. Wear high visibility clothing as well.
4. **Look For Overhead Hazards**. Every year dead limbs, lodged trees, and other overhead hazards kill and maim hundreds of loggers nationwide. All woods workers should practice "heads up" to avoid possible hazards.
5. **Work Outside of Strike Zone (Two Tree Lengths Rule).** Plan work so that loggers are separated by at least two tree lengths of the trees being felled. This is especially important when manual felling or felling with a continuously rotating saw head is being done. This separation of workers while maintaining visual or audible contact with each other greatly reduces the risk of serious injury if an accident occurs.
6. **Chain Saw Training.** Logging is one of the most dangerous occupations. Of those injured or killed, over sixty percent were engaged in cutting activities (felling, limbing, or bucking) with a chain saw at the time of their accidents. Selecting a safe direction of fall, creating the proper notch and hinge, protecting the hinge during the back cut, and proceeding on the escape path are some of the step's chain saw operators must take to fell a tree safely in the desired direction.
7. **Properly Maintain Equipment.** On fully mechanized logging operations, the greatest risk of injury occurs during equipment maintenance and repair. Logging safety experts suggest the following: Inspect your equipment before use. Establish a regular, preventative maintenance program on all equipment.
8. **Endorse Teamwork**. Implement adequate compensation and benefit plans as a means of retaining valuable, experienced employees and of keeping a good, safe crew together.
9. **Keep in Good Physical and Mental Condition.** Many loggers are injured because they show up to work in poor mental or physical condition. They may be sick, distracted because of personal problems, on drugs, tired.
10. **Don't Take Chances.** No job is so important that your safety has to be jeopardized to accomplish it. Don't hurry!

**CHAINSAW HAZARDS**

**Noise/Vibration.** When the ear is exposed to high levels of noise, such as those produced by a chainsaw, hearing loss occurs. This is permanent and worsens over time but is easily preventable. Wear properly fitted ear plugs or muffs, preferably both.

Over time, the vibration produced by a chainsaw can cause circulatory problems in your finger.

**Cuts – Beware of kickback.** Although some chainsaw injuries are caused by operator error, kickback is the greatest cause of chainsaw injuries. A kickback

usually happens when the chain and bar get caught in a cut. This usually happens when the operator doesn’t notice that tip of the bar is hitting another branch or obstacle. The chain stops for split second, transferring momentum back towards the operator. The operator then might either lose control of the saw or lose balance, bringing the saw into contact with the body.

## FINAL WORD

Logging involves exposures to a wide variety of hazards, including work in close proximity to heavy equipment and trucks; tree falls, log movements, falling objects; ergonomic issues; hand-arm and whole-body vibration; noise.