

Safe Work Procedure – Juvenile Spacing, Thinning and Mechanical Brushing

THIS SAFE WORK PROCEDURE IS DESIGNED TO BE AN INTRODUCTION TO SPACING, THINNING AND MECHANICAL BRUSHING. REFER TO SPECIFIC OPERATOR'S MANUALS AND SAFE WORK PROCEDURES FOR DETAILS ON THE OPERATION OF CHAINSAWS AND BRUSHSAWS.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

- Hard hat of contrasting colour
- Hearing Protection
- Leg protection (bucking pants)
- Eye and face protection (visor)
- Hand protection (cut resistant gloves)
- High visibility apparel
- Safety footwear (caulked boots)
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions including rain jacket and pants; insulating layers; extra gloves and head coverings for cold and/or wet weather.
- Whistle and /or portable radio
- Personal first aid kit including a large pressure bandage for any large cuts and EpiPen if allergic to bee stings.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Thinning or juvenile spacing and mechanical brushing is very physical work with many hazards associated with a forested environment including:

- Mosquitoes – have repellent available and cover
- Bees and Wasps – If any identified, inform the rest of the crew.
- Ticks – Check frequently and on a regular basis for ticks on clothing and keep pant and shirt cuffs and sleeves tucked-in. Workers should check each other also.
- Wildlife (e.g. bears, cougars, moose...) – Check the work area for any wildlife before and during operations that could have come onto the site.

To maintain good health before and during work:

- Get a good night's sleep.
- Be mentally and physically prepared to begin work, including stretching and warming up before and during work.
- Eat health, nutritious meals and refrain from using drugs and alcohol
- Prepare nutritious meals and snacks; and bring lots of water and electrolytes replacements for the work day.
- Bring personal care products including medical prescriptions and medications; sun screen; and lotions
- Take frequent small breaks for water and nutrition; and to stretch.
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PRE-WORK PROCEDURES

Prior to conducting a pre-work meeting with the crew, the supervisor or foreman should complete a pre-work meeting with the client and review the prescription or site plan, ensure that they understand the site plan requirements; and then visit the worksite and complete a documented inspection and hazard assessment, mapping any hazards that have not been detailed or found in the site plans.

Pre-Work Meeting with Crew

- Conduct a pre-work meeting with crew to review and discuss hazards (and methods to control them); site plan (e.g. cutting prescription) and maps, and emergency response procedures.
- Review on maps, allocated work areas or strips for each crew member
- Discuss who are the designated first aid attendants and the location of first aid supplies, ETV and stretcher if applicable.
- A review of emergency response plan procedures including muster point; emergency communications and signals (e.g. whistle, radio and horns); fires response; first aid procedures and evacuation procedures.
- Establish communication and check-in procedures and intervals; and don't work alone.
- Re-fuel in a designated, safe area (clearings); carry personal first extinguisher and no smoking.
- Fire protection reporting and response procedures and location of fire equipment and tools

Hazards to be aware of could include:

- Danger trees and overhead hazards
- Steep ground, rocky terrain, gullies, holes and debris
- Weather conditions including snow and ice; high winds; rain; fog and poor visibility conditions; heat and high fire hazard conditions.
- Insects and wildlife as previously mentioned.

SPACING AND THINNING TECHNIQUE

The following general rules should be followed for spacing and thinning operations:

- Each crew member is assigned a work area or strip that is flagged out.
- The worker should work uphill in a zig-zag pattern covering the whole strip, looking ahead for hazards and stem distribution.
- Stay aware of your position in the work area and the position of the adjacent workers.
- Keep stump heights low and less than 30 cm; and cut below the lowest live branch.
- All cuts should be parallel to the ground to avoid sharp points that can injure other workers and wildlife.
- All stems cut cleanly with no hinges.
- Accidentally damaged trees must be cut.
- Cut trees should not lean on crop trees.
- All conifers, other than crop trees taller than one metre must be cut.
- Cut small stems and then large ones, leaving crop trees of good form and vigour.

- Larger stems should be fallen with a small undercut.
- Generally, all woody vegetation competing with crop trees should be cut back at least one metre.
- Reduce spacing by 50 percent around natural openings, old skid trails and roads.

CHAINSAW USE:

- Use a smaller, appropriate sized chainsaw with medium sized bar, that reduce the amount of bending over to cut stems.
- Check that the chainsaw is running well and that the muffler is adequate.
- Carry a personal first extinguisher and personal first aid kit.
- The chainsaw sharp, tension set, saw properly maintained; and extra sharp chains are available.
- Have available tools available for maintaining the saw including chain sharpening tool (file guides); files; screwdriver; and grease gun.
- Check that chain brake is functioning properly.
- Check that there is sufficient mixed gas and chain oil for the work day.
- Refuel after the engine has cooled down.
- Chain brake engaged to control fast idle start.
- Maintain good balance and a secure footing when operating; and keep chainsaw below waist height.

BRUSH SAW USE

As per the items listed under chainsaw use and including:

- Avoid using brush saws on steep slopes and use only a ground level to moderately sloping terrain.
- Ensure that the saw properly maintained.
- Cut on the left side of the blade so that machine pulls away from operator.
- Saw blade sharp and extra saw blades are available.
- Ensure that the cutting head is adjusted properly and tight.
- The guard is intact.
- Harness properly fit and adjusted to prevent back strain.
- Shut off engine before putting cutter down and before cleaning out clogged or stuck cutter.

ADDITIONAL SWP NOTES

DISCLAIMER: Information contained in this document does not necessarily provide the only correct way to address machine risks. While this SWP will help operators conform to industry best practices and the intent of current Regulations and Guidelines, it may not identify all requirements or actions that will be appropriate and necessary in various situations. It does not reduce or replace users' responsibilities under applicable legislation - individual organizations (companies, employers) are responsible to ensure application of suitable processes and practices. The information provided is subject to review in light of changing government requirements and regulations. Every effort has been made to ensure the reliability of the information herein and to avoid errors and omissions.