

ENGAGING A CONTRACT TREE FALLER TO WORK

Protocol / guide for forestry contractors



INTRODUCTION

This is a protocol / guideline for forestry contractors to use before / when engaging a contract tree faller to work. It is widely accepted that tree falling is a high risk activity. With the increase in mechanisation, and reduced level of manual falling available, the use of contract fallers has increased.

There is no set standard when engaging a contract tree faller so this document provides a standard guideline to mitigate business risk and any safety concerns when engaging in this type of work. It has been developed as a joint project between WIF, FICA and Safetree. The PCBU has the primary duty of care – the primary responsibility for people's health and safety at work.

“THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES A STANDARD GUIDELINE TO MITIGATE BUSINESS RISK AND ANY SAFETY CONCERNS WHEN ENGAGING IN THIS TYPE OF WORK.”

How has this information been gathered?

Relevant stakeholders have been interviewed to draw on their knowledge and pull together this guide including:

- **Insurance Brokers** > Indemnity insurance / appropriate insurance in place.
- **Health and Safety Companies** > Best practice Health and Safety Policy.
- **Safetree** > Tree Faller Safetree Certification confirmed by Safetree to be current.
- **Contractors** > Their experiences and things to look for.
- **Contract Tree Fallers** > Their experiences and things to consider.



FOREST INDUSTRY
CONTRACTORS
ASSOCIATION



WOMEN IN
FORESTRY

KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ENGAGING CONTRACT TREE FALLERS



STAGE 1: BEFORE A CONTRACT TREE FALLER COMES TO SITE

These items should be provided / covered off before a contract tree faller even steps foot on your logging site.

1

Insurance

Every tree faller requires their own current public liability insurance to be in place. They may also have statutory liability insurance (optional).

- ✓ Get a copy of their insurance certificate/s before arrival onsite.
- ✓ Check they are current / haven't expired and take note of the renewal due dates.
- ✓ Check appropriate Vehicle insurance is in place.

IMAGINE: YOUR CONTRACT TREE FALLER'S CHAINSAW DROPS SPARKS THAT START A MASSIVE FIRE. THERE IS \$10MIL OF DAMAGE, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?



2

Health and Safety (H&S) Policy

Every tree faller requires their own H&S policy to be in place. They should also have specific tree falling policy and procedures.

- ✓ Get a copy of the faller's own H&S policy. Check that it contains all relevant and up to date information.
- ✓ Get a copy of their specific falling policy and procedures.



3

Safetree Certification

The contract tree faller should be a Safetree Certified Tree Faller.

- ✓ Get a copy of their current Safetree Certification for Tree Falling certificate.
- ✓ Confirm with Safetree that it is current – certification@safetree.nz or 0800 SAFE 123 (0800 7233 123).



4

Record of Learning (ROL)

The contract tree faller should have relevant qualifications to fall trees. Their ROL for level 4 tree falling should include:

- ✓ Level 4 tree falling 17765 or 28561.
- ✓ Level 4 machine assist tree falling 1255 or 24569 & 24570.
- ✓ Using tree jack to fell trees 24585.
- ✓ Level 4 windthrow 19765 or 1270.

Exact qualification unit requirements will depend on what tasks the tree faller will be undertaking, and methods used to assist tree falling.

- ✓ Request a copy of their ROL and check it to make sure they are fully qualified for the job.

CHECK: Will someone with the correct qualification be onsite to complete an SBO (Safety Behavioural Audit) the morning the faller arrives?

The SBO can only be undertaken by a level 3 tree faller or else another crew member who is deemed competent. If no one will be on site with the correct qualification, then falling cannot begin. In this case, you need contact your forest owner and they should be able to help arrange someone with the right qualifications on site to complete the SBO.

5

Contractor References

- ✓ Ask the contract tree faller for relevant references from other Contractors they have worked with in the past.

IMAGINE: YOUR CONTRACT FALLER HAS BEEN LET GO FROM A PREVIOUS JOB DUE TO UNSAFE PRACTICES. HOW DO YOU KNOW? COULD YOU HAVE DONE A BETTER BACKGROUND CHECK BEFORE TAKING THEM ON?

6

RT channels

Ensuring the faller has the correct RT channels to get up to your worksite safely should be done in advance. Otherwise, you can provide a handheld for their use while working onsite

- ✓ Check the faller has the correct RT channels.
- ✓ **OR** provide a handheld.

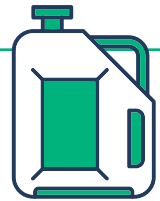


7

Fuel

Providing fuel for the chainsaw, chain bar oil and vehicle fuel is on a case-by-case basis. This needs to be agreed on before the faller comes to site.

- ✓ Check / confirm who is covering fuel for chainsaw, chain bar oil and vehicle fuel.



9

Rates and terms

The terms of your contract will vary depending on the tree faller. Before starting you should agree the hourly rate for the faller, a travel / km rate and the payment terms of any invoices (e.g. 7 day invoice or 20th of the following month).

- ✓ Confirm hourly rate.
- ✓ Confirm travel / km rate.
- ✓ Confirm payment terms.



8

PPE and relevant gear

The faller needs to have the correct PPE gear, functioning radio and first aid kit, their chainsaw needs to be up to the job, and they should have spare chains. A falling banner needs to be used at all times. Have a general discussion before they start to:

- ✓ Check they have the correct PPE for the job.
- ✓ Check their chainsaw is up to the job.
- ✓ Check they have spare chains.
- ✓ Confirm who is providing the falling banner.



10

First Aid Certificate

- ✓ Request a copy of their first aid certificate .

11

Reading and writing

- ✓ Can the faller read and write their own site risk assessment and daily tree falling tailgate or do they require assistance?

12



Driver check

- ✓ Request a copy of the faller's driver license
- ✓ You may also get a signed NZTA driver check as an extra measure
www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/driver-check

IMAGINE: YOUR TREE FALLER HAD A DUI ON THE WEEKEND AND WAS SEVERELY IMPAIRED. THEY SHOULDN'T BE DRIVING. HOW DO YOU KNOW UNLESS YOU HAVE AUTHORITY TO CHECK? ARE THEY IN THE RIGHT HEADSPACE TO BE FALLING TREES?

13

Contracts signed



- ✓ Confirm their company details including legal business name and contact info.
- ✓ Confirm bank account number.
- ✓ Ensure you have a signed agreement of work / Legal subcontractor agreement.
- ✓ Declaration about behaviour, meds and drug testing rules.

14

Pre-start drug test

- ✓ Complete a pre-start drug test

15

Working alone policy

- ✓ Discuss / confirm the working alone policy

16

Fatigue management



- ✓ Confirm what their policy on this is.
- ✓ Confirm what break have they had in between falling jobs.
- ✓ Confirm planned breaks.

IMAGINE: YOUR TREE FALLER HAS AN INCIDENT AND IT TURNS OUT THEY HAVE WORKED BACK-TO-BACK JOBS WITHOUT BREAKS FOR MONTHS. IS IT YOUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THEY ARE MANAGING THEIR FATIGUE? YES.

17

Forest Owner / Manager Notification

- ✓ Notify the forest owner that you will be engaging a contract tree faller. Tell them who you are engaging so that they can also keep a record.



STAGE 2: ONSITE

This process should be followed every morning as part of your normal crew tailgate meeting and checks, to ensure the faller is familiar with hazards, protected areas, protocols and safe and well prepared for work.

1

Induction to site

- ✓ This should be completed just as you would induct any employee to site.

2

Tailgate meeting

- ✓ Make sure they attend every safe start meeting while contract falling on your logging site.

4

Daily falling plan

- ✓ The faller and Foreman or nominated crew member complete this every morning. Make a plan for the day so everyone knows where they will be working.
- ✓ The contract faller aware of the harvest plan, hazards in the block, extraction plan etc.



5

Faller check-in process

- ✓ Confirm whose job this will be.
- ✓ Where the tree faller check in will be documented.
- ✓ Confirm what the plan is.
- ✓ Confirm if there is a handheld radio provided to the tree faller.

3

PPE check

PPE checked off by foreman to make sure all gear is adequate:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ✓ Steel cap boots | ✓ 4 wedges |
| ✓ Correct hi-vis | ✓ Hammer |
| ✓ Chaps | ✓ EPIRB |
| ✓ Hard hat (in date, 3 years, or 5 years for Protos) | ✓ Range finder |
| ✓ Grade 5 earmuffs | |
| ✓ Visor | |
| ✓ Faller belt which must hold 2 x large wound bandages | |



6

Vehicle check

- ✓ Complete vehicle audit as per one you would be doing on your own work vehicles.



7

Chainsaw check

Chainsaw checked as correct by foreman:

- ✓ Sharp chains
- ✓ Safety mitt
- ✓ Chain brake
- ✓ Rear hand guard
- ✓ Chain catcher
- ✓ Anti-vibration mounts
- ✓ Throttle lock-out
- ✓ Working on/off switch
- ✓ Spark arrestor and muffler
- ✓ Chain is still at idle

9

Mentally fit

- ✓ Confirm how they are each day.
- ✓ Confirm the plan for fatigue management.



IMAGINE: A CONTRACT TREE FALLER HAS BEEN HAVING SOME TROUBLES AT HOME AND HASN'T BEEN SLEEPING. HE MIGHT NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE SPEAKING UP IN THE TAILGATE. HAVE THE FOREMAN OR NOMINATED CREW MEMBER TAKE SOME ONE-ON-ONE TIME TO BUILD TRUST AND A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP.

8

SBO (Safety behavioral audit)

- ✓ No matter how often you engage a tree faller a SBO MUST be done every time they return to site (if they have been off site for more than a day).
- ✓ SBO can only be undertaken by a level 3 tree faller or else another crew member who is deemed competent. If no one will be on site with the correct qualification, then falling cannot begin.
- ✓ If they do not pass the SBO or you or an employee have any reason for concern regarding the ability of the tree faller, falling must stop and a new plan must be made.

CHECKLIST

ENGAGING CONTRACT TREE FALLERS

STAGE 1:

Before a contract tree faller comes to the logging site

- ☐ Insurance check
- ☐ Health and Safety (H&S) Policy check
- ☐ Safetree Certification check
- ☐ Record of Learning (ROL) check
- ☐ RT channels confirmed
- ☐ PPE and relevant gear check
- ☐ Fuel agreement
- ☐ Rates and terms agreement
- ☐ Driving license check
- ☐ First Aid Certificate check
- ☐ Reading and writing check
- ☐ Working alone policy check
- ☐ Contracts signed
- ☐ Pre-start drug test completed
- ☐ Fatigue management plan agreed
- ☐ Contractor References check
- ☐ Forest Owner / Manager Notification

STAGE 2:

First day on site

- ☐ Induction to site
- ☐ Tailgate meeting
- ☐ Daily falling plan
- ☐ Faller check-in process confirmed
- ☐ PPE check
- ☐ Chainsaw check
- ☐ Vehicle check
- ☐ SBO (Safety behavioral audit)
- ☐ Mentally fit check

STAGE 3:

Consecutive days on site

- ☐ Tailgate meeting
- ☐ Daily Falling Plan
- ☐ Check in process
- ☐ PPE check
- ☐ Mentally fit check

