

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

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| **80.09 Chainsaw Operations** | **Issued: February 25, 2025** |

1. GOVERNING REGULATIONS

These procedures are governed by the “Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide (PMS 310-1)” published by the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group](http://www.nwcg.gov/) (NWCG) and the [Texas A&M Forest Service Wildland Fire and Incident Management Team Training & Qualifications Manual](https://texasforestservice.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PnP-PublicDocuments/EfDTPzX8PhpOrPtVHfvy3V4BnzZOyfLiUKojjzgoIsrMOg?e=Jfmoi4).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish standards for safety, training, and experience guiding all chainsaw operations for Texas A&M Forest Service personnel.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Chainsaw – any mechanically-driven power cutting tool with teeth set on a chain, which moves around a bar

3.2 Chainsaw Certifier – an individual that holds the Intermediate Faller (FAL2) qualification or higher and meets additional agency requirements to be included on the Chainsaw Operations Certifier list, which is maintained by the Texas A&M Forest Service Qualifications Program

3.3 Emergency Response – a designation for actions taken by Texas A&M Forest Service personnel in response to an emergency or disaster, which include but are not limited to wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, floods, earthquakes, high wind events, and ice storms

3.4 Faller Certification Committee – an interagency group of qualified Intermediate Fallers (FAL2) or higher governed by Administrative Procedure 80.08 that serve to provide input and recommendations on chainsaw operations within the agency

3.5 Faller – a title given to an individual that has completed the training, fitness, and experience requirements to obtain one of the NWCG qualifications for chainsaw operations. This includes Basic Faller (FAL3), Intermediate Faller (FAL2), and Advanced Faller (FAL1).

3.6 Final Evaluator – an individual that meets the agency standards to sign the Final Evaluator Verification section of an NWCG Faller Position Task Book

3.7 General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator – an individual capable of operating a chainsaw under the parameters outlined within this procedure, not associated with emergency response operations

3.8 Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) – a process that identifies hazards associated with work projects and worksites and identifies protective equipment or modified work procedures needed

3.9 Position Task Book (PTB) – a standardized document that outlines the knowledge, skills, and experience required to successfully perform the expected duties of the qualification designated by the PTB

3.10 Risk Assessment (RA) – a systematic process to comprehend the nature of risk and express and evaluate risk with the available knowledge

3.11 Safety Data Sheet (SDS) – a document that provides information on the hazards of working with a chemical and how to ensure safety

3.12 Swamper – an individual that works with a Faller or General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator that assists them with safety, situational awareness, and removal of brush or debris during chainsaw operations

3.13 Trainee – an individual that currently has an NWCG Position Task Book open and is working to obtain the designated qualification

3.14 Work Capacity Test (WCT) – a fitness test established by NWCG that is used to ensure individuals maintain a minimum level of physical fitness necessary to carry out duties defined by certain NWCG qualifications.

4. REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Any Texas A&M Forest Service personnel that operate a chainsaw during Emergency Response operations must follow the standards and requirements established in the [Texas A&M Forest Service Wildfire and Incident Management Team Training & Qualifications Manual](https://texasforestservice.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PnP-PublicDocuments/EfDTPzX8PhpOrPtVHfvy3V4BnzZOyfLiUKojjzgoIsrMOg?e=PVkvDn). This includes:

4.1.1 Successful completion of NWCG S-212, Wildland Fire Chain Saws training

4.1.2 Current as an NWCG Basic Faller (FAL3) trainee, at a minimum. Must have taken S-212 and be qualified as an NWCG Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2) prior to initiating a FAL3 Position Task Book (PTB)

4.1.3 A Faller trainee must always operate a chainsaw under the supervision of a Faller that is fully qualified at or above the level the trainee is working toward

4.1.4 A final evaluator for a Basic Faller (FAL3) PTB must be a qualified Intermediate Faller (FAL2) or higher. A final evaluator for a FAL2 PTB must be an agency-approved Chainsaw Certifier (Chainsaw Certifier requirements are outlined in the Training & Qualifications Manual) that is a FAL2 or higher. A final evaluator for an Advanced Faller (FAL1) PTB must be an agency-approved FAL1 Certifier

4.1.5 Maintain, at a minimum, a Moderate Work Capacity Test (WCT) for operating on Texas incidents and Arduous for non-Texas incidents

4.1.6 After a final evaluation is complete, the PTB must be evaluated by the Faller Certification Committee to determine that it meets requirements and expectations for the qualification

4.1.7 Once certified, a Faller must successfully complete a Wildland Fire Chain Saws Annual Refresher (RT-212) every 2 years to maintain currency

4.2 Any Texas A&M Forest Service personnel that operate a chainsaw outside of Emergency Response operations and are not required to hold a NWCG Faller qualification must follow the following standards and requirements:

4.2.1 Successful completion of NWCG S-212, Wildland Fire Chain Saws training

4.2.2 Approval of the [General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator Request Form](https://texasforestservice.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PnP-PublicDocuments/EUJxrFmWDexOohrubiyE_skBoiaaZgoWbV0Xpo5AWWH1RA?e=d1pm3x)

4.2.3 A General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator must always operate a chainsaw under the supervision of a fully qualified Basic Faller (FAL3) or higher

4.2.4 A General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator can never operate a chainsaw on an operation that would be considered Emergency Response

4.2.5 Upon certification, a General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator must successfully complete a Wildland Fire Chain Saws Annual Refresher (RT-212) every 2 years to maintain currency

4.2.6 If someone that holds the General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator qualification wishes to become an NWCG Basic Faller (FAL3), they must meet all prerequisite requirements (FFT2 qualified) and then have a FAL3 Position Task Book initiated by their appropriate Department Head. Upon completion and certification of that PTB, the General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator qualification will be replaced by Basic Faller (FAL3)

4.2.7 Employees in the Field Operations Division are not eligible to hold the General-Purpose Chainsaw Operator qualification

5. SAFETY

5.1 The following safety procedures are required for all chainsaw operators. This includes NWCG trainee and qualified Fallers as well as General-Purpose Chainsaw Operators.

5.1.1 Proper PPE must be worn at all times by Fallers, General-Purpose Chainsaw Operators, and Swampers. Below is a breakdown of specific PPE to be worn on both non-fire and fire chainsaw operations:

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| **PPE** | **Non-Fire Chainsaw Operations** |
| **Hard Hat** | Hard hat or cutting helmet meeting ANSI Z89.1 |
| **Safety Glasses** | ANSI Z87.1 (clear safety glasses, at a minimum) or equivalent (mesh “bug-eye” type or mesh face shield type) (OSHA 1910.266(d) (1) (B) Note) |
| **Hearing Protection** | Hearing protection required for gasoline powered chainsaw use |
| **Gloves** | Gloves or chain saw mitts are required for all chainsaw operations. Leather required for sharpening. Alternative style of gloves may be used for inclement weather conditions, based on a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) |
| **Shirt, Pants** | Long sleeved shirt and long pants. Short sleeved shirts may be used based on a JHA |
| **Leg Protection** | Chaps or cut-resistant pants for chainsaw use shall meet the requirements of Forest Service 6170-4 or ASTM F-1897 (current version). Chaps shall overlap boots at least 2” |
| **Boots** | Cut-resistant or leather, laced 8-inch (204mm) high boots that provide ankle support and nonskid soles (hard toes are optional). OPTIONAL – Use JHA to determine proper footwear for the environment and/or related tasks |
| **Specialized PPE** | Wear additional PPE as identified by local conditions, safety data sheets (SDS), or JHA/Risk Assessment (RA) |

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| **PPE** | **Fire Chainsaw Operations** |
| **Hard Hat** | Hard hat meeting NFPA 1977 |
| **Safety Glasses** | ANSI Z87.1 (clear safety glasses, at a minimum) or equivalent (mesh “bug-eye” type) |
| **Hearing Protection** | Hearing protection required for gasoline powered chainsaw use |
| **Gloves** | Leather gloves are required for all chainsaw operations and sharpening, meeting NFPA 1977 |
| **Shirt, Pants** | Nomex® long sleeved shirt and Nomex® long pants. Nomex® meeting NFPA 1977 |
| **Leg Protection** | Chaps meeting the requirements of Forest Service 6170-4. Chaps shall overlap boots at least 2” |
| **Boots** | Leather, laced 8-inch (204mm) high boots with nonskid soles |
| **Specialized PPE** | Wear additional PPE as identified by local conditions, safety data sheets (SDS), or JHA/Risk Assessment (RA) |

5.1.2 A proper first aid kit must be on site during all chainsaw operations. The number of kits must be commensurate with the number of individuals working on the chainsaw operation. There must be at least one kit for every two people and it must include, at a minimum, a tourniquet, gauze pads, adhesive bandages, rolled bandage, triangular bandages, wound cleaning agents, scissors, tweezers, adhesive tape, latex/nitrile gloves, elastic wraps, and directions for emergency assistance. It is also encouraged for the following to be present on site: additional trauma/bleed stop supplies such as Israeli bandage, quick clot, etc., and Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

5.1.3 No individual can participate in any chainsaw operations by themselves. There must be a minimum of two individuals present at all times during all chainsaw operations.

5.1.4 There are specific hazards when operating chainsaws around powerline rights-of-way. Due to the increased danger and hazards associated with these types of chainsaw operations, the procedures and requirements outlined in the [Chainsaw Operations in the Powerline Right-Of-Way](https://texasforestservice.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PnP-PublicDocuments/Ed_YUwgGA9pBiXziAQWTigIB_kbkxxIN4aLf5GIn9dyTag?e=SgjEdB) must be followed.

6. EQUIPMENT

6.1 Below is a list of recommended supplies to keep with any chainsaw to ensure crews can effectively perform the tasks assigned as well as basic maintenance

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| **Standard Saw Kit for Assignments** | **Quantity** |
| 5 gallons of gasoline with 2-stroke mix (for proper ratio, per saw requirements) | 1 |
| Portable containers for fuel and bar oil (dolmar or sig bottles) | 2 |
| Gallon of bar oil | 3 |
| Felling axe | 2 |
| Spare chains per saw | 2 |
| Felling wedges (12”, 8”, 6”, etc.) | 6 |
| First-aid kits | 1 per 2 ppl. |
| Appropriately sized chaps for sawyer and swamper | 2 |
| **Recommended Toolkit** | **Quantity** |
| Scrench – Flathead | 1-2 |
| Scrench – Torx | 1 |
| Round files (appropriate for chain(s) being used) | 3 |
| Single mill flat file | 1-2 |
| Spark plug (appropriate for saw(s) being used) | 1 |
| Rags | 3-4 |
| Air filter | 1 |
| Tube of bearing grease | 1 |
| Small wire brush | 1 |
| Small tuning screwdriver (flathead) | 1 |
| Depth-gauge tool (optional) | 1 |
| **Recommended Spare Parts** | **Quantity** |
| E-Clips | 2-4 |
| Bar nuts | 2-4 |
| Needle bearings | 1 |
| Chain sprocket | 1 |
| Clutch drum | 1 |
| Chain tensioner assembly | 1 |
| Pull rope with handle | 1 |
| Spare fuel filter | 1 |

CONTACT: [Qualifications](mailto:qualifications@tfs.tamu.ed), (936) 564-9825