

Risk Assessment: Pruning, coppicing and felling

Location:	Various	Completed by:	Morgan Lax	Date:	12 th Jan. 2019	Review Date:	11 th Jan. 2021
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Description of site / activity / tools:

Coppicing, pruning and felling is an optional element of bushcraft and Forest School, and one which is only likely to take place with longer-term FS groups or those who are older. Clearly, if every group was to prune, coppice or fell the woodland we are using would become devoid of trees. It should be noted that Compass has a restriction on the size of tree which it can fell (6 inches in diameter) imposed by the requirements of their insurers. The use risk assessments which considers the use of bow saws and loppers should also be considered when pruning, coppicing and felling.

Pruning: removing individual branches either for the benefit of the tree or to use in greenwood working

Coppicing: is the removal of several lengths of wood from one tree in order for re-growth to occur

Felling: is the removal of an entire tree at its base

Note: all pruning, coppicing and felling will be done for an ethic of consideration for the sustainability and conservation of the woodland, and with the landowner's consent.

	Hazard	Harm	People at Risk	Existing Control Measure	Likelihood (1-3)	Severity (1-3)	Rating LxS (1-9)	New Control Measure Who? When?	Comments
1.	Struck by falling tree	Crush injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning of the risk • Fall zone identified and made clear • Cut a wedge to encourage the direction of fall • Consider the natural lean of the tree which will dictate the direction of fall • Avoid felling in strong winds • Identify and clear escape routes • Use a buddy system- one cutting one watching • Communication between cutter, observer and instructor • Use of bow saw to cut rather than chainsaw • Felling only done with small participant to instructor ratios (1:4 or 1:6) • Only one tree to be felled at a time 	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider use of ropes and pulleys to encourage the fall • Use of goggles, high visibility vests and hard hats to be considered 	
2.	Struck by falling branch	Injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Explain the collapse zone of a branch • Cutting outside of the collapse zone • No cutting above head height 	2	2	4		

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two arms and tool circumference around the tree as an exclusion zone 					
3.	Falling/stuck in tree	Injury/exposure	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • All coppicing to be done from the ground 	1	2	2		
4.	Pulling on <i>hung up</i> branch	Strain/falling when it comes loose- injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Clear lower branches so the branch falls to the ground • Use of ropes and pulleys to free the <i>hung up</i> branch 	1	2	2		
5.	Pruning, felling or coppicing in windy conditions	Uncontrolled braches/trees causing injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • Avoid cutting in windy conditions 	1	2	2		
6.	Saw dust in eyes	Eye irritation/ injury	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal warning • No cutting above head height • Avoid cutting in windy conditions • Use of exclusion zone 	2	1	2		The use of goggles will be considered if this presents an issue
7.	Lone working	Injury whilst isolated	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No participants to work alone • If instructors are working alone then the notify a responsible person of the location, the expected return time and the nature of the activity • No felling or other high risk issues to be undertaken whilst alone 	1	3	3		
8.				•					
9.				•					
10.				•					
Comments/Concerns: This risk assessment will be reviewed in the event of any incident or near miss in order to be fully informed for the future. It is not an exhaustive list, and is written with experience of FS and bushcraft activities in mind and the incidents (or lack of) that have been encounter in the preceding 2 years.					Recommendations: For bi-annual review- due Jan 2021.				

