



**FSH 6709.11 – HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE**

**CHAPTER 20 – WORK PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

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<b>New Document(s):</b>	6709.11,22.48b	14 Pages
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**Digest:**

Reformats the directive to current standards. Inserts Parts 16e thru 16i of 22.48b, which were left out inadvertently.

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### CHAPTER 20 – WORK PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

## 22 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

### 22.4 – Forest Management.

22.48 - Chain Saw Operations.

22.48b - Qualifications. This guidance sets forth Pacific Northwest Region and Pacific Northwest Research Station policy and procedures for chain saw operations.

Forest Service personnel must perform all chain saw and related operations in accordance with FSM 6700, FSH 6709.11. Partial adherence is unacceptable. The policy and procedures set forth comply with 29 CFR 1910.266, Logging Operations.

1. **Training.** Prohibit chain saw operation unless an operator has successfully completed training and certification, except in emergency situations where life is threatened.

2. **Objective.**

- a. To develop a program for safe operation of chain saws in the workplace.
- b. To protect Forest Service employees from injury or mishap when operating chain saws while performing their official duties.
- c. To provide training and certification prior to the operation of chain saws.
- d. To ensure that Forest Service employees are provided with personal protective equipment and clothing for chain saw operations.

3. **Policy.**

- a. Provide appropriate training to employees on the potential safety and health risks that may be encountered during chain saw assignments.
- b. Prohibit chain saw operation unless the operator has successfully completed training and certification.

4. **Responsibility.** The Safety and Health group in Human Resources in the Regional Office has primary responsibility for the R-6/PNW Chain Saw Program, which includes:

- a. Training, evaluating, certifying, and recertifying chain saw instructors.
- b. Evaluating chain saw operators and instructors by making unannounced field visits of crews.
- c. Monitoring instructor's chain saw training sessions and assisting where needed.
- d. Serving as a member of Regional or Forest Chain Saw Accident Investigation Team.

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- e. Signing the Chain Saw Safety certificates for Forest Lead Program Instructors and maintaining certification records.
- f. Recertifying Forest Lead Program Instructors who have taught or have assisted in at least one chain saw operator training course in the previous 2-year period.
- g. Reviewing all chain saw incidents/accidents submitted by the Forest Lead Program Instructor on form R6/PNW-FS-6700-3 to the Region/Station Safety and Health Manager/Specialist.

**5. Regional Forester and Station Director.** The Regional Forester and Station Director have overall responsibility for the Chain Saw Program on National Forest System lands.

**6. Forest Supervisor and Program Manager.** The Forest Supervisor and Program Manager have responsibility to administer policy and direction as set forth by the Regional Forester and Station Director.

**7. District Ranger and Unit Manager.** The District Ranger and Unit Manager have responsibility for carrying out the administrative aspects of the Chain Saw Program as outlined below, including responsibility for:

- a. Determining the skill, knowledge, training, and supervision requirements for job assignments.
- b. Determining the overall unit needs for the total number of operators needed to accomplish all assigned unit tasks.
- c. Requesting training and certification, to be coordinated by the Forest Lead Program Instructor or the Forest/Laboratory Safety Coordinator, depending on the level of skill needed.
- d. Consulting with the Forest Lead Program Instructor to determine whether or not an employee is considered trained, qualified, and certified; if not, the District Ranger and Unit Manager have ultimate authority to revoke certificates at any time.

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8. **Forest Lead Program Instructor(s).** Each forest has at least one lead instructor. Responsibilities include:
- a. Coordinating, training, and jointly certifying all Class C chain saw operators on the forest.
  - b. Acting as the primary contact for all other instructors on the forest or unit.
  - c. Guiding, counseling, and assisting all other instructors in implementing, operating, and monitoring the actual on-the-ground program.
  - d. Working closely with the Forest/Laboratory Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator to achieve and maintain a standardized program throughout the forest or unit.
  - e. Sharing responsibility with the Forest/Laboratory Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator and Professional Faller in selecting and recommending individuals (during the Class C certifying process) to the Forest Supervisor or Program Manager as potential instructors.
  - f. Being accountable for confirming that a person has the skills and knowledge to be qualified at a certain level to perform the task.
  - g. Serving jointly as instructor or monitor with the Professional Faller when conducting Class C training and certifying of chain saw operators.
  - h. Cosigning with Professional Faller the Chain Saw Operator Evaluation form, R6/PNW-FS-6700-1, for Class C operators.
  - i. Coordinating, training, recertifying, and jointly certifying all levels of chain saw operators (Class A, B, and C) on their forest or unit.
  - j. Signing and issuing certification cards for Class A, B, and C (bucking) chain saw operators. Qualified District and Unit Instructors may sign and issue certification cards for Class A and B chain saw operators when approved by Forest Lead Program Instructor. (See 13. f.)
  - k. Coordinating and maintaining certification and test records for the individuals who have taken the training.
  - l. Collecting and submitting all chain saw incidents/accidents on form R6/PNW-FS-6700-3 to the Forest/Laboratory Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator and the Region/Station Safety and Health Manager/Specialist.

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9. **District/Unit Instructor.** Major responsibilities include:
- a. Coordinating, training, recertifying, and jointly certifying with Forest Lead Program Instructor all Class A and B chain saw operators on the district or unit.
  - b. Acting as the primary contact for district or unit chain saw operators and first-line supervisors.
  - c. Guiding, counseling, and assisting district or unit chain saw operators in implementing, operating, and monitoring the actual on-the-ground program.
  - d. Working closely with the Forest Lead Program Instructor to achieve and keep a standardized program on the district or unit.
  - e. Sharing responsibility with the Forest Lead Program Instructor in selecting and recommending individuals (during the Class B certifying process) to the Forest Lead Program Instructor as potential District or Unit Class C Instructors.
  - f. Being accountable for confirming that a person has the skills and knowledge to be qualified at a certain level to perform the task.
  - g. Serving jointly as instructor or monitor with the Forest Lead Program Instructor when the latter is conducting Class A and B training.
  - h. Signing, when approved by the Forest Lead Program Instructor, the Chain Saw Operator Evaluation, form R6/PNW-FS-6700-1, for Class A and B operators.
  - i. Signing and issuing certification cards for Class A and B (bucking) chain saw operators, when approved by the Forest Lead Program Instructor.
  - j. Coordinating maintenance of certification and test records with the Forest Lead Program Instructor.
  - k. Collecting and submitting all chain saw incidents/accidents on form R6/PNW-FS-6700-3 to the Forest Lead Program Instructor.

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10. **First-Line Work Supervisor.** Major responsibilities include:
- a. Notifying the District Ranger or Unit Manager of the actual on-the-ground need for chain saw operators.
  - b. Working closely with the Forest Lead Program Instructor or Unit Instructor, supervising and monitoring the chain saw operators.
  - c. Halting and correcting any hazardous operation that is observed on the work site.
  - d. Recommending to the District Ranger or Unit Manager and the Forest Lead Program Instructor that the certification card be suspended and the employee reevaluated if hazardous operation continues.
  - e. Collecting and submitting all chain saw incidents/accidents on form R6/PNW-FS-6700-3 to the Forest Lead Program Instructor.
  - f. Ensuring that operators have received proper training and certification prior to the operation of chain saws.

11. **Forest/Laboratory Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator.** Major responsibilities include:
- a. Establishing the program in conjunction with the Forest Lead Program Instructor.
  - b. Monitoring the overall program for the Forest Supervisor or Laboratory Program Manager.
  - c. Guiding, counseling, and assisting the District Ranger or Unit Manager in implementing the policy and direction set forth by the Regional Forester and Station Director.
  - d. Collecting and reviewing annually all chain saw incidents/accidents, submitted on form R6/PNW-FS-6700-3, with the Forest Lead Program Instructor and District/Unit Instructor.

12. **Chain Saw Operator.** Perform all chain saw work as described by current class of certification.

All chain saw operators are not necessarily expert users of chain saws. Forest Lead Program Instructors need to identify operating limitations of Class A and B trainees on the reverse of the certificate when appropriate. Limitations should refer to chain saw operations such as "limbing only," "bucking only," "limbing and bucking only," or "brushing only."

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**13. Training and Certification Procedures.**

- a. All chain saw training and certification shall use, either in part (as in Class A) or in total (as in Class B), the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Course, S-212 Wildfire Chain Saws. Each successful operator shall receive a certificate signed by the Forest Lead Program Instructor or qualified District or Unit Instructor.
- b. **Class A Certification.** Apprentice chain saw operators (Class A) are required to complete the S-212 course for chain saw operations and work under the supervision of the Class B or Class C operators. Class A operator certification is primarily limited to brushing and bucking activities. The instructor certifying the operator shall set the size of material, normally limited to 8 inches and smaller in diameter. Minimum training requirements include classroom instruction on Forest Service policy and procedures. Additional field training will be determined by the instructor, based on previous experience and field examination of trainee.

The course shall contain 28 hours of training by the Forest Lead Program Instructor.

- (1) Classroom instruction shall last 2 to 4 hours. The instructor shall introduce and review Forest Service policy and procedures, proper maintenance and care of a chain saw, and the use of applicable safety equipment.
  - (2) In the field, training shall focus on hands-on operation of the chain saw in the practices of felling, brush cutting, and bucking of material not to exceed 8 inches in diameter. At the end of the course, the students will be required to pass certification from a Forest Service Program Instructor. The instructor may modify the certification at the request of the operator's immediate supervisor to tailor the certification to specific work applications.
- c. **Class B Certification.** Intermediate chain saw operators are required to complete course S-212 for Class B certification.

Class B operator certification includes the working ability in felling, bucking, and brush cutting of materials up to 24 inches in diameter.

The course shall contain 28 hours of training by the Forest Lead Program Instructor.

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- (1) Classroom instruction shall last 2 to 4 hours, with review of Forest Service policy and procedures as well as proper personal protective equipment.
  - (2) In the field, focus shall be on hands-on operation of chain saws in the practice of felling, brushing, and bucking of materials not to exceed 24 inches in diameter. The felling portion of certification for the Class B operator shall be under the guidance and supervision of a fully certified Class C instructor. At the end of the course, the students shall be required to pass certification from the Forest Service instructor. The instructor may make modifications at the request of the operator's immediate supervisor to tailor the certification to specific work applications.
- d. **Class C Certification.** Advanced chain saw operators shall complete the advanced S-212 course. Class C operator certification includes working ability in felling, bucking, and brushing of materials that exceed 24 inches in diameter.
- (1) Classroom instruction shall last 2 to 4 hours, with a review of Forest Service policy and procedures and required personal protective equipment.
  - (2) In the field, training shall focus on hands-on operation of chain saws in the practice of brushing, bucking, and felling of materials exceeding 24 inches in diameter. At the end of the course, the student will be required to pass certification from a consultant/professional, identified by the Forest Lead Program Instructor as a professional in the field.
- e. **Crosscut Saws.** The minimum training for crosscut saws will be the Class B certification requirements, above, that include the principles of cutting and bucking. Additional training will address specific use and operation of the crosscut saw.
- f. **Instructor Responsibilities.** The individual(s) responsible for scheduling, coordinating, and conducting training, as well as certifying chain saw operators, are listed below by class:
- (1) Class A and Class B: Forest Lead Program Instructor and/or District/Unit Instructor will schedule, coordinate, and conduct the training and certification. District/Unit Instructors may sign and issue certification cards when approved by the Forest Lead Program Instructor.



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- (2) Class C: The Forest or Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator and the Forest Program Lead Instructor shall schedule and coordinate the certification.

The Forest Lead Program Instructor and an outside Professional Faller, both with demonstrated instructor skills, shall conduct the certification.

The instructors have complete authority to limit the scope of the certification. They may impose time, project, or size limitations at their discretion.

The Forest Lead Program Instructor shall ensure that a record of training is completed and maintained for each person who successfully completes the training and certification.

People who successfully complete the certification shall receive a chain saw operator's qualification card.

Class A and Class B      Valid for 1 year.

Class C                      Valid for 2 years.

When the card expires, the individual must be field-tested and recertified. (See 15. b.)

An appropriate Forest Service Instructor shall sign the Approving Instructor block on the card. A District Ranger or Unit Manager shall sign the Approving Official block.

The District Ranger or Unit Manager and Forest Lead Program Instructor have the ultimate authority and responsibility in determining whether or not an employee is considered trained and qualified.

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14. **Certification.** This section defines the qualifications for operating chain saws.

- a. **Class A.** Apprentice chain saw operators using chain saws for felling and bucking are limited to material under eight (8) inches in diameter. Minimum requirements include the successful completion of the Introductory, Power Saw Mechanics, and Basic Chain Saw Operations units of S-212.
- b. **Class B.** Intermediate chain saw operators using chain saws for felling and bucking are limited to material under 24 inches in diameter. Minimum requirement includes the successful completion of S-212.
- c. **Class C.** Advanced chain saw operators are considered skilled in felling and bucking material over 24 inches in diameter. Minimum requirement includes the successful completion of an advanced felling certification session.

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15. **Recertification and Training.** This section shall be used to recertify chain saw operators.

- a. Modify the S-212, Wildfire Power Saw, course if necessary to take into account the experience of operators being recertified. Place emphasis upon practical exercises involving tree felling, bucking, and limbing. If possible and practical, recertification can be accomplished on the operator's "typical work" project.

Before recertification, each operator must demonstrate that the expectations of their current class of operation can be performed successfully and safely. The employee must demonstrate a competent level of experience, to the satisfaction of the instructor, prior to recertification.

- b. Class A and Class B recertifications are valid for one year. When certification expires, the individual will require recertification. Minimum recertification requirements are:
  - (1) Classroom review shall last 2 hours and will involve applicable safety films and job hazard analysis/situational awareness review.
  - (2) Hands-on field review involving the District/Unit Instructor should require that the operator perform work with material relevant to the certification. The District/Unit Instructor shall sign the Approving Instructor block on the A and B cards. The Unit Manager shall sign as the Approving Official.
- c. Class C recertifications are valid for 2 years. When the card expires, the individual will need to be field-tested for recertification. Minimum recertification requirements are:
  - (1) Classroom review shall last 2 hours and involve applicable safety films and job hazard analysis/situational awareness review.
  - (2) Hands-on field review, conducted by a consultant or other professional identified by the Forest Lead Program Instructor, should require that the operator perform work with material consistent with the size indicated by the certification standards. The Forest Lead Program Instructor all sign the Approving Instructor block on the "C" card. The Forest Supervisor shall sign the Approving Official block.

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**16. Process for Implementation on Each Forest/Unit/Laboratory.**

- a. The Forest Lead Program Instructor and the Forest/Laboratory Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator shall introduce the program to Line Officers/Managers who have overall administrative responsibility for the Chain Saw Program.
- b. The Forest/Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator should canvas their Forest/Unit, through each District Ranger/Unit Manager, for individuals who will be using chain saws in their daily work.
- c. Unit Managers/District Rangers, in conjunction with the Forest Lead Program Instructor, should identify employees needing operational certification into the following groups.
  - Class A - Apprentice chain saw operators
  - Class B - Intermediate chain saw operators
  - Class C - Advanced chain saw operators
- d. The Forest Lead Program Instructor shall research local sources for chain saw instructor expertise in felling, bucking, limbing, and other chain saw operations.

If a person is interested in promoting the procedural safety process for chain saw operations, arrange a meeting and "C" certification session with the Regional Lead Program Instructor to explain the program and obtain the person's services. Suggested below are guidelines to follow for selecting the professional consultant/instructor/feller to conduct the forest, district, or laboratory training and certification.

- (1) Demonstrated ability to instruct, work with the chain saw, and communicate well with large and small groups.
  - (2) Five (5) years' minimum experience, 10 years for felling
  - (3) References from peers which qualify the person as an expert or professional in the field.
- e. The Forest/Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator, in conjunction with the Forest Lead Program Instructor, sends a letter requesting that candidates names submitted under group "C" attend a certification process. This includes classroom discussion on procedural felling/bucking (with written quiz) as well as practical felling, bucking, and limbing exercises in the field.

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- f. Upon satisfactory completion of the first verification process for Class C operators, the Forest Lead Program Instructor and Professional Faller/Consultant shall jointly sign off, indicating that the individual meets or exceeds the standards of an advanced chain saw operator.
- g. During the verification process of the Class “C” group, the Forest Lead Program Instructor, Forest/Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator, and the professional Faller (Consultant) should identify those people with practical skills, knowledge, and positive attitudes. These individuals should be considered for District/Unit Instructor responsibilities.
- h. After certification of the Class C group, and with the nomination or targeting of individuals for cadre positions, the Forest/Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator and Forest Lead Program Instructor must discuss cadre selection with Unit Managers; for example, time, energy, and dollar commitment due to involvement of the particular individual selected.
- i. Once the District/Unit Instructors for Class A and Class B training/certification have been selected, the Forest/Unit Safety and Health Manager/Coordinator and Forest Lead Program Instructor must hold a session with all District/Unit Instructors to develop the program on that Forest/Unit as stated in this supplement.

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17. **Monitoring.** Monitoring is critical to the prevention of chain saw accidents. This section deals with follow-up of instructors and operators to assure correct chain saw operating procedures.
- a. The Regional Safety and Health group has primary responsibility for the R-6/PNW Chain Saw Program.
  - b. The Regional Lead Program Instructor and Program Coordinator is designated to observe conditions of chain saw use in the course of activity reviews or other periodic inspections to ensure that workers are using acceptable procedures for tree felling and other chain saw applications. The evaluation procedure involves:
    - (1) Review of operator's training, certification, and recertification (Forest Lead Program Instructors).
    - (2) Review of felling methods and operator understanding of felling cuts and their relationship to each other, wedges, escape routes, procedural felling steps, and other critical points of chain saw use.
    - (3) Use of personal protective equipment.
    - (4) Review of JHA's.
    - (5) Safety and tailgate meetings.
    - (6) Observation of unsafe practices; corrective actions.
    - (7) Review of supervision and instruction of operators who are in training status or who have a restricted operation.
    - (8) Use of stump reading to judge the quality of felling work. (Also a useful self-teaching tool for an operator.)
    - (9) Encouragement of both announced and unannounced chain saw project inspections.
    - (10) Steps to ensure the safety of anyone not directly involved with the felling operation.