

## Tree Felling Safety

*This Everyday Safety Tailgate Talk contains information sourced from the National Local Technical Assistance Program Association, the US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension*

- Each employee involved in tree felling should be instructed on exactly what to do. If somebody is not involved in the operation, they should keep clear of the work area.
- Before cutting down any tree consider the following: Shape of the tree, lean of the tree, wind force and direction, decay, hollow areas or other weak spots, location of overhead utilities in all directions, location of other workers and equipment. Look for any other things that may cause trouble when the tree falls.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment consistent with the hazards. Hard hat, eye and face protection, hearing protection, chaps, gloves and sturdy work shoes are required when using a chain saw.
- The work area should be cleared and an escape route planned before any cutting is started.
- Shut off chain saws or apply the chain brake before clearing the area.
- Rotten, split, hollow or frozen trees may fall in an unexpected direction even though the open face notch is made on the proper side. It may be necessary to use ropes and wedges to make sure it falls in the intended direction. Always keep clear of the butt of the tree when it starts to fall.



- Multiple people limb cutting on the same felled tree should be avoided. Be aware of others working in the area. Limbs often roll and move during cutting and removal. This scenario has also been the cause of several injuries.

### **DEAD TOPS AND BRANCHES = WIDOW MAKERS**

Avoid rotten trees, those that have a dead top and those trees with large dead or hanging limbs. These trees can come apart when sawing or lose their tops or branches as the tree is felled. They are termed “widow makers” because of their propensity to fall on the sawyer and kill or maim.



### **Resources and References:**

#### **University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Safe Tree Felling Publication**

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjO7dCYp7HrAhWrTt8KHxjjArAQFjASegQIAxAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcespubs.uaf.edu%2Findex.php%2Fdownload\\_file%2F1423%2F&usg=AOvVaw1fiKa0iAixuGHEzIEy5xOj](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjO7dCYp7HrAhWrTt8KHxjjArAQFjASegQIAxAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcespubs.uaf.edu%2Findex.php%2Fdownload_file%2F1423%2F&usg=AOvVaw1fiKa0iAixuGHEzIEy5xOj)

#### **New York State Arborists**

<https://nysarborists.com/>

#### **United State Forest Service Tree Felling Webpage**

<https://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/html04232822/page15.htm>

#### **OSHA Logging E-Tool**

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/logging/index.html>