Tree surgery site risk assessment

Fill in on site before work starts. Score every hazard, tick the checks, complete any add-ons that apply, then brief the crew and everyone signs.

BUSINESS

DATE

CUSTOMER

SITE ADDRESS

WORK TO BE DONE

WEATHER CONDITIONS

SUPERVISOR / COMPETENT PERSON

CLIMBER(S)

GROUND CREW

OTHERS ON SITE (MEWP OPERATOR, BANKSMAN, ETC.)

Hazards

Likelihood (L)
1 Very unlikely
2 Unlikely
3 Possible
4 Likely
5 Very likely

Severity (S)
1 Minor (first aid)
2 Minor injury
3 Lost-time injury
4 Major injury
5 Fatal

Score = L × S, with the controls in place

1–4 Low	Carry on with the controls in place.
5–9 Moderate	Carry on, and check the controls are working.
10–15 High	Add controls before starting and tell the crew why.
16–25 Extreme	Stop. Don't start until the work is re-planned.

Hazard	Who's at risk	Controls	L	S	Score
Falling from height (climbing / MEWP)	Operative	Correct PFPS, anchor point selection, MEWP rescue plan, competent supervision			
Struck by falling branches / timber	Operative, ground crew, public	Exclusion/drop zone, hard hats, spotters, controlled lowering/rigging			
Chainsaw contact injury	Operative	PPE to EN381, trained/certificated operators, correct cutting technique			
Struck by vehicles / traffic	Operative, public, road users	Chapter 8 signing, lighting & guarding; hi-vis; banksman where needed			
Contact with overhead / underground services	Operative, public	Service plans checked, CAT & Genny scan, safe clearance distances			
Manual handling (logs, brash, equipment)	Operative	Team lifting, mechanical aids, correct technique, task rotation			
Noise exposure (chainsaw, chipper)	Operative	Hearing protection, exposure time limits, equipment maintenance			
Hand-arm vibration (HAVs)	Operative	Trigger-time monitoring, anti-vibration equipment, job rotation			
Slips, trips and falls (ground level)	Operative, public	Site housekeeping, suitable footwear, ground survey before works			
Wildlife / protected species disturbance	Site, environment	Pre-works wildlife check, nesting season awareness, halt works if found			

OTHER SITE-SPECIFIC HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

Site set-up and welfare

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Site survey carried out and hazards identified before starting	☐	☐	☐
Exclusion / work zone established with signage, cones or barriers	☐	☐	☐
Welfare facilities available (toilet, water, rest area)	☐	☐	☐
First aid kit on site, in date, and location known to all	☐	☐	☐
Fire extinguisher / fire point available where required	☐	☐	☐
Spill kit available for fuel, oil and chemicals	☐	☐	☐
Emergency vehicle access route identified and kept clear	☐	☐	☐
Mobile phone signal checked / alternative communication arranged	☐	☐	☐
All operatives briefed on site-specific risk assessment (toolbox talk)	☐	☐	☐
Neighbouring properties / public notified where required	☐	☐	☐

PPE

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Head protection (EN 397 / EN 12492)	☐	☐	☐
Eye / face protection (visor or safety glasses)	☐	☐	☐
Hearing protection	☐	☐	☐
Chainsaw protective trousers / chaps (Class 1 or above)	☐	☐	☐
Chainsaw boots (Class 2 or above)	☐	☐	☐
Cut-resistant gloves	☐	☐	☐
Hi-vis clothing	☐	☐	☐

Health, COSHH and manual handling

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Fuel, oil and chemicals stored and handled per COSHH data sheets	☐	☐	☐
COSHH data sheets available on site for all substances in use	☐	☐	☐
Manual handling assessed: mechanical aids or team lifting used where practical	☐	☐	☐
Operatives fit and well, physically and mentally, for the task	☐	☐	☐
Individual operator limitations known and accounted for	☐	☐	☐
Adequate breaks / hydration planned, particularly in hot or cold weather	☐	☐	☐
Lone working avoided, or specific lone-working controls in place	☐	☐	☐

Environment and wildlife

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Trees checked for signs of nesting birds before works (bird nesting season)	☐	☐	☐
Trees checked for signs of bats or bat roosts before works	☐	☐	☐
Tree Preservation Order (TPO) / Conservation Area status confirmed and any consent obtained	☐	☐	☐
Protected species survey completed where indicated	☐	☐	☐
Arisings / waste handled per biosecurity guidance (cross-contamination, ash dieback, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

Works halted and specialist advice sought if protected species found	☐	☐	☐

Emergency arrangements

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Emergency procedure briefed to all operatives (who calls 999, who gives first aid)	☐	☐	☐
Aerial rescue plan understood by all, nominated rescuer identified	☐	☐	☐
Accident / incident reporting procedure understood (RIDDOR where applicable)	☐	☐	☐

FIRST AIDER ON SITE (NAME)

NEAREST A&E HOSPITAL AND POSTCODE

SITE ADDRESS / WHAT3WORDS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

Add-ons

Complete only the sections that apply to this job.

Roadside working (Chapter 8)

Where work is next to or affects a public highway.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Site-specific traffic management plan / drawing in place	☐	☐	☐
Signing, lighting and guarding installed in line with Chapter 8	☐	☐	☐
Operative(s) hold current Chapter 8 / SLG certification	☐	☐	☐
Cones, signs and barriers correctly spaced and secured	☐	☐	☐
Advance warning signs positioned at correct distance	☐	☐	☐
Pedestrian route maintained and protected	☐	☐	☐
Banksman / traffic marshal in place where required	☐	☐	☐
Vehicles parked safely with hazard lights / beacons as needed	☐	☐	☐
Equipment removed and road reinstated at end of works	☐	☐	☐

Tree climbing and aerial rescue

Where the tree is climbed.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Climbing is the most appropriate method for this task (MEWP / ground work not reasonably practicable)	☐	☐	☐
Tree condition assessed before climbing (decay, deadwood, stability)	☐	☐	☐
Clearly defined drop zone and work zone established, understood by all	☐	☐	☐
Communication method between climber and ground staff agreed and clear	☐	☐	☐
Personal fall protection system: primary + backup, correctly configured	☐	☐	☐
Anchor points selected correctly and full-body-weight tested where practical	☐	☐	☐
Two high anchors used wherever practical; potential fall distance kept under 500mm	☐	☐	☐
Climbing equipment inspected before use (visual and tactile pre-use check)	☐	☐	☐

Climbing helmet with chin strap worn	☐	☐	☐
Rescue plan in place and understood by all operatives	☐	☐	☐
Nominated rescuer identified, trained, and equipment immediately available	☐	☐	☐
Weather conditions suitable for the task	☐	☐	☐
Enough personnel present, including provision for rescue	☐	☐	☐

Chainsaw use

Chainsaw work on the ground or in the tree.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Operator holds current, relevant chainsaw certification (e.g. CS30/31, CS38/39)	☐	☐	☐
Chainsaw inspected before use: chain tension, chain brake, guards, throttle interlock	☐	☐	☐
Correct chain and bar for the task fitted	☐	☐	☐
Chainsaw started safely (ground level or secured, per manufacturer's guidance)	☐	☐	☐
Second (top-handled) saw used with appropriate lanyard / retention where working aloft	☐	☐	☐
Tool retention / lanyarding in use to prevent dropped objects	☐	☐	☐
Fuel and chain oil handled and stored safely; spill kit available	☐	☐	☐
Cutting technique appropriate to task and position in tree	☐	☐	☐
Hand-arm vibration exposure (trigger time) monitored and within limits	☐	☐	☐

Rigging and dismantling

Where sections are lowered with rigging.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Rigging plan agreed by the team before work begins	☐	☐	☐
Load calculated and within safe working load of rigging equipment and anchor points	☐	☐	☐
Rigging equipment (slings, blocks, ropes) inspected and in date / LOLER compliant	☐	☐	☐
Anchor point(s) for rigging assessed as sound	☐	☐	☐
Ground crew positioned outside the drop / swing zone at all times	☐	☐	☐
Clear communication / signal system agreed between climber and ground crew	☐	☐	☐
Lowering device set up and function-tested before use	☐	☐	☐
Speed-line, block or port-a-wrap correctly rigged and load-tested	☐	☐	☐
Targets below (structures, services, other trees) identified and protected	☐	☐	☐

MEWP (mobile elevating work platform)

Where a MEWP is used.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Operator holds valid MEWP certification (e.g. IPAF) for the category of machine used	☐	☐	☐
Ground conditions assessed as suitable and stable (bearing capacity, slope, services)	☐	☐	☐
Pre-use inspection completed (controls, emergency lowering, harness anchor point)	☐	☐	☐
Exclusion zone established around the machine's working envelope	☐	☐	☐

Operative wearing harness with correct lanyard, attached to designated anchor point	☐	☐	☐
Rescue plan in place in the event of MEWP failure or operator incapacitation	☐	☐	☐
Overhead hazards checked (power lines, branches) before raising platform	☐	☐	☐
Machine on level, stable ground with outriggers / stabilisers deployed as required	☐	☐	☐

Mobile crane

Where a mobile crane is used for lifting.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Lift plan prepared by an appointed person and briefed to all involved	☐	☐	☐
Crane operator and slinger / signaller hold current, relevant certification	☐	☐	☐
Ground conditions assessed and confirmed suitable for crane set-up (bearing capacity)	☐	☐	☐
Exclusion zone established around crane's working radius	☐	☐	☐
Load weights calculated and within the crane's safe working load at the required radius	☐	☐	☐
Communication method between crane operator, slinger and climber agreed	☐	☐	☐
Overhead and underground services checked and clear of the working area	☐	☐	☐
Lifting / rigging equipment inspected and LOLER compliant	☐	☐	☐

Chipper, stump grinder and plant

Ground machinery and vehicles.

☐ Applies to this job (leave the section blank if not)

Check	Yes	No	N/A
Chipper positioned on stable, level ground with feed tray guard in place	☐	☐	☐
Exclusion zone maintained around chipper infeed and discharge area	☐	☐	☐
Emergency stop / reverse function tested and understood by all operators	☐	☐	☐
No loose clothing, drawstrings or jewellery worn near infeed	☐	☐	☐
Push stick / paddle used to feed brash; hands kept clear of infeed rollers	☐	☐	☐
Stump grinder guards in place and exclusion zone maintained	☐	☐	☐
Vehicles and trailers: towing hitch, lights and load security checked	☐	☐	☐
Loaded vehicles within legal weight limits and load correctly secured	☐	☐	☐

Briefing and sign-off

By signing, each person confirms they have been briefed on this assessment and understand the controls and the emergency arrangements.

Name	Signature	Date