

# Machine-Assisted Tree Felling



An introduction  
to Safetree<sup>TM</sup>

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# Machine-Assisted Tree Falling

**Wherever possible a machine should be used to eliminate tree felling hazards as it greatly reduces the risk to manual tree fallers.**

**Machine assistance is best used when felling:**

- ▶ windthrow
- ▶ trees against their natural lean or crown weight
- ▶ hung-up trees
- ▶ around waterways, roads, archaeological or sensitive sites, boundaries
- ▶ very large, heavy leaning or malformed trees
- ▶ spars or rotten trees.

**A machine is allowed to work within one tree length as long as:**

- ▶ it is involved in the tree falling operation
- ▶ it's big enough to handle all aspects of the operation and is equipped with the appropriate guarding, protection structures and safety features
- ▶ the faller and machine operator can communicate effectively (industry best practice is by radio telephone)
- ▶ when winching trees over, the rope is secured as high as practicable up the tree
- ▶ the machine is not in the direct line of the intended direction of fall.

**The faller is responsible for controlling the machine-assisted tree falling operation, making sure:**

- ▶ people who aren't directly involved in the operation are at least two tree lengths away
- ▶ roads and access ways are closed and/or controlled
- ▶ communication is established and maintained with the machine operator and all others involved
- ▶ all people involved are trained and competent to do their jobs safely.

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## Basic machine-assisted tree falling procedure:

1. Establish felling, communication and traffic management plans and procedures with everyone involved
2. Prepare work area and escape route
3. If pushing the tree, make sure the work area is clear, then position the machine directly behind the lean, ensuring there's enough leverage to move the tree forward once felling cuts have been made
4. If pulling, tension the rope enough to hold the tree in position – watch out and stay clear of flying bark when tension comes on
5. Make the appropriate felling cuts and communicate how much tension is needed to the machine operator
6. Periodically pause and look up, checking for tree top movement and overhead hazards
7. Felling cut finished, retreat along the escape route before communicating to the machine operator to increase the tension to bring the tree down safely.

**Please note:** These steps are a general guide and may not suit all situations.

## Warning

Machine-assisted felling needs a high degree of skill and experience and should only be carried out by a competent faller and machine operator.

**For more information about Machine-Assisted Tree Falling: ACoP Section 11 Tree Felling; Professional Tree Felling Field Guide Version 2; and the BPG for Tree Felling.**