



Avalonia Land Conservancy's Policy Statement
on
Chain Saw Use by Volunteers on Avalonia Properties

Scope:

This Policy covers the use of chain saws by volunteers on Avalonia Properties. Gas powered and electric chain saws are covered by this policy. Use of Pole saws is outside of the scope of this policy.

Chain saws cause about 40,000 reported injuries and deaths annually in the United States. Most are head and leg injuries. Almost all chainsaw accidents can be prevented by using common sense and by using safe cutting practices endorsed by OSHA and the logging industry.

Policy Requirements:

Wearing and use of appropriate safety equipment, and working with safety in mind is always required on Avalonia preserves. Avalonia has a Tree Team that should be called upon to deal with difficult or dangerous trees or blowdowns. This team should be contacted via the chair of the Avalonia town committee or via the stewardship committee chair. Members of the Tree Team will decide if they can deal with the problem or whether outside professional services will be required. **In general, volunteers who are not members of the tree team should confine their chainsaw usage to removal of uncomplicated blowdowns from trails or parking lots.**

- Work with chainsaws should never be done alone.
- A first aid kit must be present on site
- Chainsaw operators must be physically fit, competent, and sufficiently experienced to tackle the work being performed.
- Use of proper protective clothing on site, a chain saw in good working order and with a chain brake (gas or electric chain saws may be used).
- To alert trail users to work ahead flagging tape should be strung across impacted trails during tree felling or clearing. In case of longer duration tree clearing/felling work warnings should be posted at trail heads.

Proper Protective Clothing

- A hard hat, preferably with a face shield and ear protectors built in;
 - Protective leg chaps or chain saw pants (class 1 compliant)
 - Eye protection;
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- Hearing protection
- Boots appropriate for work in rough terrain.
- Gloves (with non-slip surfaces) - recommended but not required.

Chain Saw

A volunteer who brings his or her own chain saw must check the saw every day before use to verify that:

- The throttle interlock works;
- The chain brake works;
- The chain catch is present
- The saw is in good overall condition without missing parts or loose fasteners.

Training

Training equivalent to the “Game of Logging” training, steps 1 and 2, is highly recommended but not required for volunteers outside of sawyer members of the Tree Team. Avalonia will hold a training session on chainsaw safety as required. Volunteers may also request reimbursement from Avalonia for **approved** participation in classes meeting the above guidelines.

“Game of Logging” training includes:

- Parts of a chain saw and their purpose
 - Parts of a chainsaw blade and how to sharpen the blade
 - How to size-up a tree for cutting
 - How to cut down a tree
 - How to safely limb a downed tree
 - How to safely buck a downed log
 - How to safely cut a spring pole
 - The importance of never working alone
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Work Authorization

Apart from removal of blowdowns from trails or parking lots and dangerous trees by the Tree Team, all other tree removal must be authorized by the appropriate Town Committee. A requirement of authorization is that at least two people are on site when chainsaw work is performed and a first aid kit is present at the work site.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Avalonia's Chainsaw Policy

In consideration of my wish to perform volunteer work using a chain saw with Avalonia Land Conservancy, I, _____, have been provided with a copy of Avalonia Land Conservancy's Policy Statement on Chainsaw Use by Volunteers on Avalonia Properties. I hereby acknowledge receipt of this policy.

I acknowledge that any chainsaw work involves certain known and unknown hazards that could result in serious injury, permanent disability, or death. Known hazards include being cut by the chain saw, being struck by falling trees, limbs, or portions of the trunk, and being struck by objects that fall from overhead trees or are thrown through the air when a tree or portion of a tree falls. I further acknowledge that I have the right to refuse to participate in any activity that I feel is unsafe or exceeds my abilities.

Signature

Date

Printed Name, Address, and Phone No.

(Signed acknowledgements to be returned to the Avalonia office c/o Toby Glaza, Stewardship Coordinator)

Appendix to Policy

The following general guidelines are not components of the Avalonia Chain Saw Policy but are accepted chainsaw use best practices and are included within this document for **information and guidance**.

Chainsaw Operation and Work Practices

- Gas chain saws shall be fueled at least 10 feet (3 m) from any open flame or other source of ignition.
- Gas chain saws shall be started at least 10 feet (3 m) from the fueling area.
- Gas chain saws shall be started on the ground or where otherwise firmly supported. Drop starting a chain saw is prohibited.
- Gas chain saws shall be started with the chain brake engaged.
- The chain saw shall be held with the thumbs and fingers of both hands encircling the handles during operation.
- The chain-saw operator shall be certain of footing before starting to cut. The chain saw shall not be used in a position or at a distance that could cause the operator to become off-balance, to have insecure footing, or to relinquish a firm grip on the saw.
- Prior to felling any tree, the chain-saw operator shall clear away brush or other potential obstacles which might interfere with cutting the tree or with access to the retreat path.
- The chain saw shall not be used to cut directly overhead.
- The chain saw shall be carried in a manner that will prevent operator contact with the cutting chain and muffler (Gas chain saws).
- The chain saw shall be shut off or the throttle released before the feller starts his retreat.
- The chain saw chain brake shall be engaged at the end of a cut and whenever a saw is carried to the next cut unless the saw is shut down
- Volunteers shall be spaced and the duties of each volunteer shall be organized so the actions of one will not create a hazard for any other.
- Work areas shall be assigned so that trees cannot fall into an adjacent occupied work area. The distance between adjacent occupied work areas shall be at least two tree lengths of the trees being felled. The distance between adjacent occupied work areas shall reflect the degree of slope, the density of the growth, the height of the trees, the soil structure and other hazards reasonably anticipated at that work site. A distance of greater than two tree lengths shall be maintained between adjacent occupied work areas on any slope where rolling or sliding of trees or logs is reasonably foreseeable.
- Each volunteer performing chain saw operation at a work site shall work in a position or location that is within visual or audible contact with another person.

Felling and Trimming Trees

- No person shall approach a feller closer than two tree lengths of trees being felled until the feller has acknowledged that it is safe to do so.
- Each danger tree shall be felled, removed or avoided. Each danger tree, including lodged trees and snags, shall be felled or removed using mechanical or other techniques that minimize volunteer exposure before work is commenced in the area of the danger tree. If

the danger tree is not felled or removed, it shall be marked and no work shall be conducted within two tree lengths of the danger tree.

- Felling on any slope where rolling or sliding of trees or logs is reasonably foreseeable shall be done uphill from, or on the same level as, previously felled trees.
- Domino felling of trees is prohibited. Note: The definition of domino felling does not include the felling of a single danger tree by felling another single tree into it.
- Before felling is started, the feller shall plan and clear a retreat path. The retreat path shall extend diagonally away from the expected felling line. Once the backcut or trigger cut has been made the feller shall immediately move a safe distance away from the tree on the retreat path.
- Before each tree is felled, conditions such as, but not limited to, snow and ice accumulation, the wind, the lean of tree, dead limbs, and the location of other trees, shall be evaluated by the feller and precautions taken so a hazard is not created for any person.
- Each tree shall be checked for accumulations of snow and ice. Accumulations of snow and ice that may create a hazard shall be removed before felling is commenced in the area or the area shall be avoided.
- When a spring pole or other tree under stress is cut, no person other than the feller shall be closer than two tree lengths when the stress is released.
- An undercut shall be made in each tree being felled. The undercut shall be of a size so the tree will not split and will fall in the intended direction.
- A backcut shall be made in each tree being felled. The backcut shall leave sufficient hinge wood to hold the tree to the stump during most of its fall so that the hinge is able to guide the tree's fall in the intended direction.
- The backcut shall be above the level of the horizontal facecut in order to provide an adequate platform to prevent kickback. Exception: The backcut may be at or below the horizontal facecut in tree pulling operations. Note: This requirement does not apply to open face felling where two angled facecuts rather than a horizontal facecut are used or to plunge cut backcuts where trigger wood is left provided that the facecut angle is at least 70 degrees.
- Limbing and bucking on any slope where rolling or sliding of trees or logs is reasonably foreseeable shall be done on the uphill side of each tree or log.
- Before bucking or limbing wind-thrown trees, precautions shall be taken to prevent the root wad, butt or logs from striking any person. These precautions include, but are not limited to, chocking or moving the tree to a stable position.



Example of a top facecut



Example of a bottom facecut



Example of a backcut

Note that with a plunge cut trigger wood is left on the outside away from the bottom cut until you are ready to fell the tree (Good cut for leaning trees – should not be attempted on dead trees)