



## Chainsaw Safety & Certification Policy

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) recognizes and supports the essential role of volunteers in the maintenance of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail system and the stewardship of lands in which we have a conservation interest. In order to keep trails open and passable for public use and to ensure CFPA properties are maintained and free of hazards, CFPA believes the safety of its workers is of principal importance. In recent times chainsaws have replaced manual saws and CFPA, its Trails Committee and Board of Directors recognize that a consistent program for the safety standards and certification of chainsaw operators is necessary to ensure the protection of all workers to every extent possible.

In its commitment to equip and train CFPA sawyers, including Trail Managers, volunteers, partner organizations and employees, as well as in its work with cooperating state agencies, CFPA:

- Follows the Forest Service's Missoula Technology and Development Center and/or the Soren Eriksson's Game of Logging training curricula for chainsaw operator training and certification. In evaluating individual sawyer skills, an authorized instructor may decide at any time that an individual requires additional training or is not a suitable sawyer for CFPA programs.
- Recognizes that individual volunteers and staff have primary responsibility for their own personal safety and for compliance with the requirements for chainsaw operators outlined by the Forest Service and/or the Game of Logging. Furthermore, each sawyer engaged in trail or property maintenance activities assumes personal responsibility for following crew-leader and CFPA direction, assessing his or her own physical condition and preparedness for engaging in these activities, and coming properly equipped and clothed in a manner appropriate for the location, duration, weather conditions, and proposed work.
- Follows current safety requirements outlined by the Forest Service and/or the Game of Logging and recognizes that volunteers may require additional time, resources, and assistance to meet the stated safety requirements and goals of the training.
- Currently recognizes four levels of sawyer training: Apprentice, Trail Sawyer 1, Trail Sawyer 2 and Advanced Trail Sawyer; each of which requires a re-certification course every 3 years (see "*Sawyer Proficiency Levels*" below).

To the extent feasible, CFPA will:

- Seek funding to implement regular trainings and equipment purchases necessary for chainsaw instruction and safety management for its staff and volunteers.
- Provide access to personal protective equipment (PPE) meeting current best management practices for its certified volunteer and employee sawyers.
- Reimburse approved volunteer expenses for first-aid training and PPE purchases.
- Encourage CT DEEP to recognize current certifications for CFPA volunteers working on state lands.
- Prepare current best practices which will be summarized in a volunteer-friendly format.

- Work with the State and partners to publish and distribute effective training materials and host training workshops as necessary.

CFPA has the following expectations of all volunteer and employee sawyers:

- All volunteer and employee sawyers will wear all required PPE at all times when operating a chainsaw on the Blue-Blazed Trail System or a CFPA property. Required PPE include the following: six-point suspension hardhat, ear protection, eye and face protection, chainsaw chaps, long sleeve shirt, long pants, 8-inch high leather boots and leather work gloves.
- All volunteer and employee sawyers must have current first aid certification.
- CFPA requires that no sawyer work alone, work beyond their ability, or put another volunteer or a member of the public at risk at any time.
- All volunteer and employee sawyers will only use chainsaws with functional modern safety features including, but not limited to, throttle/ throttle interlocks, chain brakes, chain catchers, mufflers and handguards.
- CFPA-owned chainsaws may only be used on CFPA-authorized projects, trails or properties. Sawyers who borrow CFPA-owned saws must follow best practices and safety procedures outlined in this policy. Use of CFPA-owned chainsaws can be suspended if these items are not followed.

Implementation: CFPA recognizes that it will take time to fully train volunteers to satisfy the expectations and requirements stated in this policy. In light of this, CFPA will institute a 2 –year grace period (from the enactment of this policy by the CFPA Board) to allow adequate time for trainings to be scheduled and volunteers to be trained. Building a strong cadre of saw volunteers versed in safe and best chainsaw practices and operation is our ultimate goal. All volunteers interested in operating a saw on CFPA property or trails will have two years to become compliant with the certification standards of this policy.

## SAWYER PROFICIENCY LEVELS

The Association shall issue certification cards and indicate the proficiency level as follows:

**Apprentice Sawyer.** A first-time or beginner sawyer who has demonstrated limited skills in basic bucking and limbing and generally has limited field experience.

Apprentice Trail Sawyers have demonstrated a knowledge of the following: hazard analysis, tension, hand positioning on the saw, spring poles, bore cuts, best safety practices, and basic bucking & limbing analysis. (This level is equivalent to an "A" level sawyer as designated by the USFS.)

Re-certification is required every three years. This level may not use a CFPA chainsaw without supervision of a Trail Sawyer 1, Trail Sawyer 2 or an Advanced Sawyer. An Apprentice Sawyer must be in the company of a higher-certified sawyer to work on a CFPA trail or property. A certified instructor will sign-off on the apprentice's advancement to the next Trail Sawyer level. An Apprentice Sawyer will not be eligible to advance to a higher level for one year. The certifying instructor has full authority to impose restrictions as they deem necessary and to advance them to the next level.

It is strongly suggested that a person at this level gain additional experience by spending at least 10 hours of saw time in the company of a Trail Sawyer to gain a comfort level with saw techniques.

**Trail Sawyer 1.** A skilled saw operator capable of performing "Apprentice" level tasks as well as more complex procedures. This sawyer level has limited training and mentoring responsibilities for Apprentice Sawyers within the scope of their skill set.

These sawyers have demonstrated a proficiency in the following: hazard analysis, tension, hand positioning on the saw, spring poles, bore cuts, best safety practices, basic felling, and bucking and limbing analysis. (This level is equivalent to a "B" level sawyer as designated by the USFS.)

Re-certification is required every three years. This level may use a CFPA chainsaw. The certifying instructor has full authority to impose restrictions as they deem necessary and to advance them to the next level. It is strongly suggested that a person at this level continue to hone saw skills and safety techniques and attend advanced trainings to develop proficiency in felling.

**Trail Sawyer 2.** A skilled saw operator capable of performing "Trail Sawyer 1" level tasks as well as more complex procedures such as complex bucking and felling procedures and assessing storm damage and hazard trees. They have training and mentoring responsibilities for all CFPA Sawyers within the scope of their skill set.

These sawyers have demonstrated a proficiency in the following: hazard analysis, tension, hand positioning on the saw, spring poles, bore cuts, best safety practices and advanced bucking,

limbing and felling analysis. (This level is equivalent to a “B” level sawyer as designated by the USFS.)

Re-certification is required every three years. This level may use a CFPA chainsaw. The certifying instructor has full authority to impose restrictions as they deem necessary and to advance them to the next level. It is strongly suggested that a person at this level continue to hone saw skills and safety techniques and attend advanced trainings to develop proficiency in felling.

**Advanced Trail Sawyer.** This is considered a journeyman level sawyer proficient in handling complex cutting operations with considerable experience in felling damaged hazard trees. They have training and supervision responsibilities and are qualified to conduct classroom and field training for the Apprentice and Trail Sawyer levels.

These sawyers have demonstrated a proficiency and competency in the following: hazard analysis, spring poles, bore cuts, best safety practices and required personal protective equipment (PPE), bucking, advanced felling and instruction of these items. (This level is equivalent to a “C” level sawyer as designated by the USFS.)

Re-certification is required every three years. This level may use a CFPA chainsaw. It is strongly suggested that a person at this level attend advanced trainings to develop further proficiency in advanced felling of hazard trees and other more complicated cuts.