

National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC)

One of the most widely recognized training schemes for tree work is set by the National Proficiency Tests Council. Tree contractors who have passed NPTC assessments carry an ID card.

- For **felling** only, units CS 30 (Maintain the Chain Saw), and CS 31 (Fell Small Trees) are enough for trees up to 8 - 15" diameter; CS 30 and CS 32 (Fell Medium Sized Trees) for trees 15 - 30" diameter; CS 30 and CS 33 (Fell Large Trees) for trees over 30" diameter. For each of these, "A" after the unit means conifers, and "B" means broadleaves.
- For **felling trees in sections (dismantling)**, from small spaces where there is not room to fell a whole tree in one go, you should only employ a contractor with staff who have passed unit CS 41 (Carry out Dismantling Operations).
- For **pruning (tree surgery)**, you should only employ a contractor with staff who have passed unit CS 40 (Carry out Pruning Operations).

Before they can take unit CS 40 or CS 41, tree contractors must have been trained to climb and rescue people from trees, and to climb and use a chainsaw in trees. These are covered by unit CS 38 (Climb Trees and Perform Aerial Tree Rescue), and CS 39 (Operate the Chainsaw from a Rope and Harness).

Again, contractors have to pass CS 30, CS 31 or CS 37 before they can do CS 38 or CS 39, so that somebody who has CS 40 or CS 41 will also have passed CS 30, CS 31 or CS 37, CS 38, and CS 39.

Only people who have been trained to do so should use a chainsaw in a tree - in other words people with CS 39 (CS 22 up to 1996), CS 40, or CS 41.

If one member of the team is climbing, there should always be at least one other member of the team who is trained in climbing and aerial rescue, in case the climber is injured - in other words, somebody with CS 38, CS 39, CS 40, or CS 41.

The NPTC chainsaw and climbing units are to certify persons
competent to carry out the work safely

NPTC certification is not a guarantee of standard of work

Summary of NPTC chainsaw units

For guidance only - for full details contact NPTC. Numbering and precise unit details have changed over the years, so equivalent old units are also shown.

current unit number	(equivalent or approximately equivalent to old unit number)		units which must be passed before this one can be taken
CS 30	CS 10	maintain the chain saw	-
CS 31a	part of CS 11	fell small trees (conifer)	CS 30
CS 31b	part of CS 11	fell small trees (broadleaf)	CS 30
CS 32 a	part of CS 12	fell medium trees (conifer)	CS 31
CS 32 b	part of CS 12	fell medium trees (broadleaf)	CS 31
CS 33 a	part of CS 13	fell large trees (conifer)	CS 32
CS 33 b	part of CS 13	fell large trees (broadleaf)	CS 32
CS 34	part of CS 14	clear individual windblown trees	CS 32
CS 35	part of CS 14	clear multiple windblown trees	CS 32
CS 36	CS 16, parts of CS 11, 12, 13	cross-cut and stack produce	CS 30
CS 37	part of CS 12, CS 13, CS 21	breakdown medium sized broad-leafed crowns	CS 36
CS 38	SCOTVEC 88157	climb trees and perform aerial rescue	-
CS 39	CS 22	operate the chainsaw from a rope and harness	CS 38, either CS 31 or CS 37
CS 40	AA 8	carry out pruning operations	CS 38, CS 39
CS 41	AA 9	carry out dismantling operations	CS 38, CS 39