



Chainsaw cross-cutting and manual stacking



Introduction

This leaflet covers the safe working practices to be used when cross-cutting and stacking timber. For guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE), the machine, preparing to work, maintenance, fuelling and starting procedures see AFAG leaflet 301 *Using petrol-driven chainsaws*.

You can use this leaflet, along with the chainsaw manufacturer's handbook, as part of the risk assessment process to help identify the controls to put in place when cross-cutting and stacking.

You must also assess the effect of the site and the weather as well as following this guidance.

All operators must have had appropriate training in how to operate the machine and how to carry out the tasks required (see HSE leaflet INDG317 *Chainsaws at work*).

Preparing to cross-cut and stack

- ❑ 1 Clear any debris that is likely to interfere with the cross-cutting process.
- ❑ 2 Plan the work so that the lightest produce moves furthest.
- ❑ 3 Use bearers or other supports where possible.
- ❑ 4 Ensure the work area gives a good firm footing.
- ❑ 5 A length of timber should only be broken down into sections by one person at any one time.
- ❑ 6 Ensure that a safe working distance is maintained between workers (at least 5 m) and between workers and machinery (outside the risk zone of the machines being used).
- ❑ 7 Maintain a secure and balanced stance.
- ❑ 8 When cross-cutting on slopes, work on the uphill side of logs if there is a risk of the timber rolling.

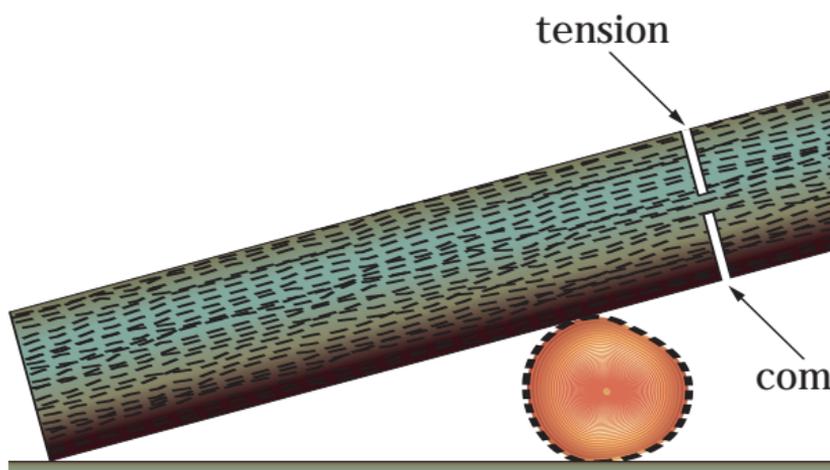


Figure 1 Identification of tension and compression wood

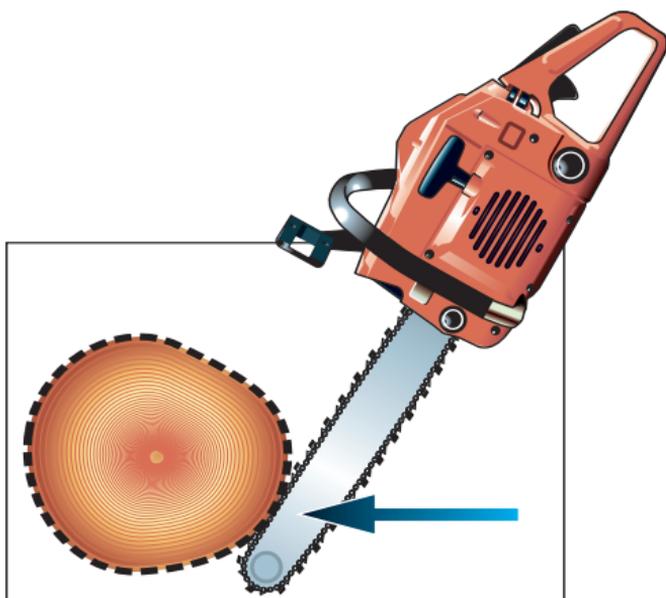
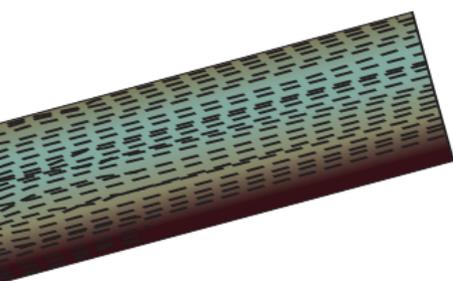


Figure 2 Start of boring cut

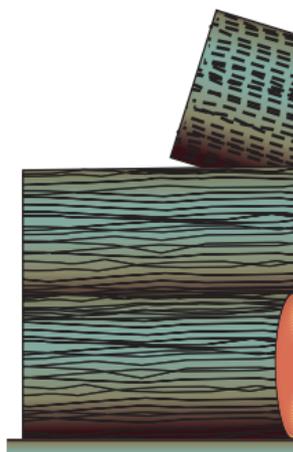
- ❑ **9** Reduce excessive tension by first making a cut on the compression side of the log (see Figure 1).
- ❑ **10** When it is necessary to use a boring cut, do not start with the tip of the guide bar and ensure that it does not strike other stacked material as this can cause kickback (see Figure 2).
- ❑ **11** If the chainsaw jams, switch it off. Pull the chainsaw gently to see if it can be dislodged, otherwise use the correct aid tools to open the cut.
- ❑ **12** Be ready to step back quickly if the log being cut starts to roll.

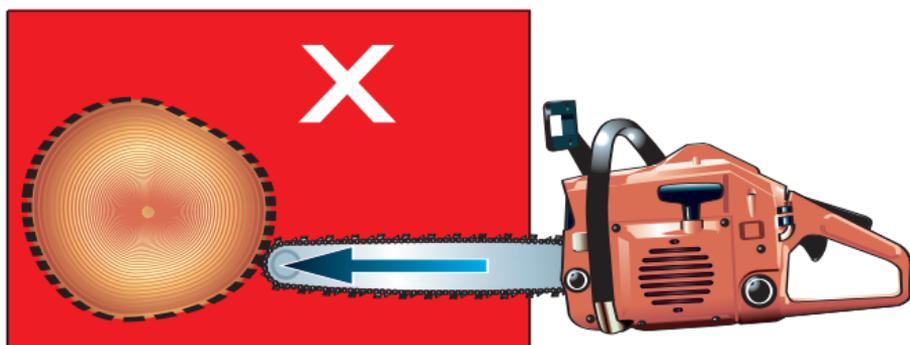
Manual handling and stacking

- ❑ **13** Follow best practice when manual handling (see HSE leaflet INDG145 *Watch your back*).

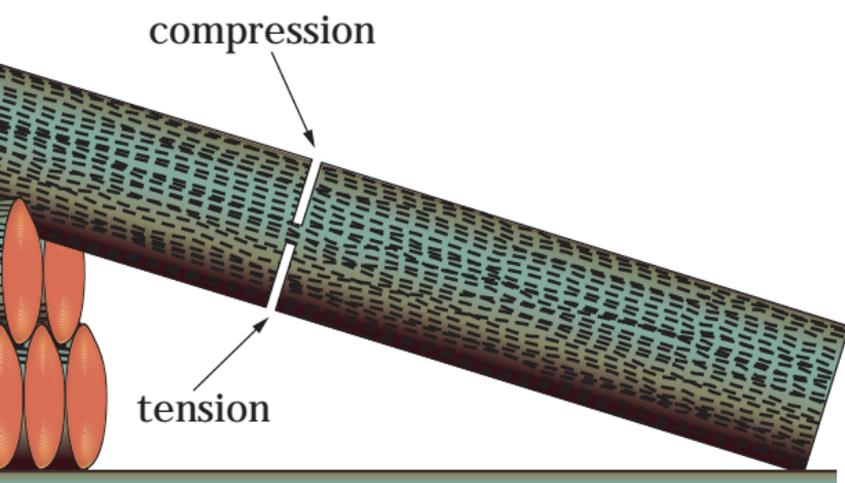


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- 14** Use appropriate aid tools for lifting and moving timber, eg pulp hooks, lifting tongs, cant hooks and pickaroons.
- 15** Stack cut material frequently so that it does not create a hazard underfoot.
- 16** Stacks of timber should always be made and maintained in a stable condition. Do not stack on steep ground at the roadside.
- 17** Where stacks are manually produced, the height of the stacked timber should not exceed about 1 m. Otherwise, so far as is reasonably practicable, stack heights should not exceed 2 m.
- 18** Take special care in areas frequented by the public. Where appropriate, although not a substitute for safe stacking, a warning sign conforming to the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 should be displayed, and/or the site enclosed with hazard warning tape.



Further reading

<i>Using petrol-driven chainsaws</i>	AFAG301
<i>Basic chainsaw felling and manual takedown</i>	AFAG302
<i>Chainsaw snedding</i>	AFAG303
<i>Chainsaw clearance of windblow</i>	AFAG306
<i>Chainsaw felling of large trees</i>	AFAG307
<i>Use of winches in directional felling and takedown</i>	AFAG310
<i>Emergency planning</i>	AFAG802
<i>Electricity at work: Forestry and arboriculture</i>	AFAG804
<i>Watch your back: Avoiding back strain in timber handling and chainsaw work</i>	INDG145
<i>First aid at work: Your questions answered</i>	INDG214
<i>Managing health and safety in forestry</i>	INDG294
<i>Chainsaws at work</i>	INDG317
<i>Protect your hearing or lose it!</i>	INDG363

These publications are available from HSE Books - see 'Further information'.

Notes

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Further information

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This leaflet is available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 2639 3. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books.

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