



FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT  GENERAL ORDER	SUBJECT: CHAINSAW SAFETY PROGRAM		NUMBER: 501.4
	EFFECTIVE DATE: December 10, 2018	REVIEW: December 2022	
	TOPICS: PURPOSE AND POLICY		
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: Operations Support Bureau			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input type="checkbox"/> Revised
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA 33.6.1		
	VLEPSC TRN.02.01		

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish guidelines regarding the training, operation, and maintenance of chainsaws by members of the Fairfax County Police Department.


II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Fairfax County Police Department that chainsaws are utilized by only those officers who are Certified Chainsaw Operators to clear roadways of small to moderate sized trees to expedite emergency response.

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	TOPICS: DEFINITIONS		
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: Operations Support Bureau			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input type="checkbox"/> Revised
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA 33.6.1		
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III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Certified Chainsaw Operator (CCO): An officer who has successfully completed a Department approved chainsaw training program.
- B. Chainsaw: A mechanical power driven cutting tool with teeth set on a chain that moves around the edge of a blade.
- C. Chaps: A pair of pants made of cut resistant material.
- D. Chain Brake System: A device to stop the rotation of the chain if activated in a kickback situation by the operator's hand or by inertia.
- E. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Protective gear consisting of heavy duty gloves, helmet, safety glasses, face shield, hearing protectors, protective chaps, and boots.
- F. Safety Officer: As per Standard Operating Procedure [10-038](#), the first line supervisor assigned to the Operations Support Bureau and who is in charge of the Safety Officer Program.
- G. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): A US Department of Labor agency whose mission is to assure safe and healthful working conditions by setting and enforcing standards and providing training, outreach, education and compliance assistance.

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	<p>TOPICS: AUTHORITY</p>		
<p>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: Operations Support Bureau</p>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input type="checkbox"/> Revised
<p>ACCREDITATION STANDARDS</p>	<p>CALEA 33.6.1</p>	<p>VLEPSC TRN.02.01</p>	

IV. AUTHORITY

- A. The Operations Support Bureau shall have administrative and operational responsibility of the chainsaw safety program.
- B. Direct oversight of the chainsaw safety program will be the responsibility of the Safety Officer.
- C. Based on severe weather, environmental conditions, or other safety concerns:
 - 1. The Duty Officer and Police Liaison Commander may suspend chainsaw operations on a countywide basis or by individual district station area.
 - 2. District station commanders and on-duty supervisors may suspend chainsaw operations for their respective district station area.
 - 3. Certified chainsaw operators shall notify their supervisor to inform them that they will not be operating the chainsaw if they determine the environment to be unsafe.


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	TOPICS: TRAINING, RECERTIFICATION AND EQUIPMENT		
RESPONSIBLE ENTITY: Operations Support Bureau			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Replaces: <input type="checkbox"/> Revised
ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA 33.6.1, 17.5.3, 46.1.8 VLEPSC TRN.02.01, ADM.19.03		

V. TRAINING AND RECERTIFICATION

- A. The Safety Officer Program is responsible for oversight of the chainsaw training program and required recertification of CCOs.
- B. Only officers who are trained and certified by the Fairfax County Police Department in the use of the chainsaw shall be permitted to use them.
- C. Officers shall attend recertification every two years to maintain their proficiency with the chainsaw.
- D. The Safety Officer Program will be responsible for maintaining the list of CCOs.

VI. MAINTENANCE AND EQUIPMENT


- A. Only Department issued chainsaws shall be used by a CCO.
- B. Chainsaw maintenance and repairs shall only be done by an approved certified dealer. A list of approved certified dealers will be maintained by the Safety Officer.
- C. Station Logistic Technicians are responsible for scheduling the maintenance of the chainsaw and ensuring proper Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) is available.
- D. Dull blades shall be replaced by a certified dealer and not sharpened.

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	TOPICS: OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS		
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ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA 33.6.1 VLEPSC TRN.02.01		


VII. PROCEDURES

The following procedural guidelines have been established to ensure Departmental chainsaw use complies with OSHA regulations and best safety practices.

- A. CCOs shall inspect the chainsaw prior to its operation to include, but not limited to:
 1. Handles and guards, controls, chain tension, cutting edges, bolts and mufflers to ensure that they are functioning properly and adjusted per the manufacturer's instructions.
 2. If the CCO determines the chainsaw is not functioning properly, the chainsaw shall not be used and the CCO shall notify the Station Logistic Technician (SLT) of the malfunction. The SLT shall have the chainsaw repaired at a certified dealer approved by the County.
- B. Refueling of chainsaws shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, and:
 1. Should take place at least 20 feet from the cutting site.
 2. Occur at least 10 feet from any open flame or other source of ignition.
- C. PPE shall be worn when operating the chainsaw.
- D. CCOs shall start the chainsaw on the ground or on another firm support surface and at least twenty feet away from the fueling area, with the chain brake engaged. Drop starting is never allowed.
- E. The chainsaw shall not be used to cut directly overhead.

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- F. The use of the chainsaw will be at the discretion of the CCO with the following considerations:
1. Weather conditions.
 - a. Use of the chainsaw in high winds should be avoided. The risk of additional trees falling must be assessed.
 - b. Poor weather conditions, ice, wet leaves, uneven, or loose ground may affect the officers footing.
 2. The area surrounding the tree should be inspected prior to making the decision to use the chainsaw.
 - a. Clear away dirt, debris, small tree limbs and rocks from the chainsaw's chain path. Look for nails, spikes or other metal in the tree before cutting.
 - b. Watch for branches under tension, they may spring out when cut.
 - c. If the tree is in contact with a wire of any kind, the chainsaw shall not be used. Notification to the proper utility company should be made.
 - d. Secure and prevent any pedestrian or vehicle traffic from entering the area where the chainsaw is being utilized.
 3. If the tree is too large and/or outside the capabilities of the CCO, notification to the Virginia Department of Transportation shall be made for its removal.
- G. A spotter shall be used for security and for monitoring the area for safety hazards.
1. A planned escape route should be prepared prior to the operation of the chainsaw.
- H. Department employees not directly involved in the chainsaw operation shall stay clear of the work area.
- I. When a chainsaw is used by a CCO, a Chainsaw Event shall be created and closed with proper disposition.

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	TOPICS: LEGAL REFERENCES		
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ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	CALEA 33.6.1		
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VIII. LEGAL REFERENCES

- A. US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation [29 CFR 1910.266, Logging Operations.](#)

General Order 501.4 becomes effective on December 10, 2018, and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to this subject.

ISSUED BY:

APPROVED BY:



Chief of Police



County Executive