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| Revision #:Written by: | Date: Month DD, YYYYApproved by: |
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| Related Documents:  | * Owner’s Manual for Specific axe or machete if available
* Part 9 of the OHS General Health & Safety Regulations
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| When to use this SWP: | Protecting workers from injuries associated with the use of axes, bush axes, and machetes. Axes, bush axes, and machetes to be used and maintained in compliance with manufacturer’s guidelines. |
| Hazards & Risks: | * Cuts/Amputation
* Strains & Sprains
* Blisters
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| Personal Protective Equipment: | CSA approved equipment:* Steel toes
* Safety glasses
* Hard hat if trees taller than 2 meters
* Gloves
* Shin guards for horizontal & Vertical chopping
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| Training Requirements: | * Training by a competent experienced person
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| Communication Process: | * Work with an experienced person before operating on your own.
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| Equipment & Supplies: | * First Aid Kit
* Fire Extinguisher
* Cell/Smart Phone or two-way radio
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| 1. Read the owner’s manual before use, if one is available
2. Inspect axe, bush axe, and machete before use paying particular attention to the condition of the handle. Cracked or splintered handles to be replaced.
3. Wear the recommended CSA/ANSI standard PPE as listed above or as per Hazard Assessment requirements.
4. Axe, bush axe, and machete to be used for designed purpose only.
5. Between uses, embed axe head into a log or stump to prevent cuts and or tripping hazard.
6. Guards or sheaths placed over axe head or blade when not in use and while transporting it or traveling to another work area.
7. Repair of axes and machetes shall be performed only by trained and authorized personnel only.
8. Use only sharp axes, bush axes and machetes.
9. Sharpen axes using a preferred whetstone or file.
10. Use proper form and technique to prevent strains and sprains.
11. Ensure chopping area is clear of other workers, branches and materials that can be tripping hazards or that may interfere with your swing.
12. If chopping wood, find a block or tree stump to put it on to avoid dulling the axe.
13. If felling trees using an axe follow good notching and wedging techniques for the size and height of the tree.
14. Have an effective and safe chopping grip. Hold just under the axe head with one hand and the other at the end of the handle, with a firm grip yet loose enough grip so when you swing the axe and the grip allows the hand close the axe head to slide back to the handle end; allowing your hands to come together.
15. Keep axe heads clean and dry. Moisture can damage axe heads. Dried tree sap such as from pine or spruce trees can dry hard on a blade making it difficult to remove and prevent good axe function.
16. Treat the handle of the axe to prevent it from drying out or taking on water. Changes to the handle can change how well it functions when used.
17. Warm up the axe in cold weather to prevent damage to the blade. Warm next to a fire or heat source, or with it in the sheath, hold between legs or under arm to absorb body heat.
18. Do not cut or swing the machete across your body. Keep at least three times the arm length from co-workers and watch to ensure workers do not enter your work zone during your swing.
19. Check surroundings, then chop with machete, and check surroundings again and repeat.
20. Use a pinch grip on a machete y taking your forefinger and thumb to hold the machete loosely while the other fingers lightly support the pinch grip. This will help prevent blisters.
21. Recommend gloves to be worn to prevent blisters or if hands are moist while using a machete. A lanyard also helps to maintain a grip on the machete, especially beginners.
22. Avoid striking straight with a machete. Maintain a 45-degree angle.
23. Avoid using a forceful swing, allow the machete to do the work for you using the pinch grip and 45-degree swing.
24. If making a thick cut with a machete use a V-shaped notch.
25. Always chop or cut away from your body.
26. Use a mesh chain glove when sharpening axes and machetes.
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| EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: | In case of emergency, contact 911 and the farm owner immediately. Remove yourself from harm’s way and ensure no one else is at risk.  |