



VALE PATH VOLUNTEERS (VPV)

PATH MAINTENANCE TEAM OF THE RAMBLERS

VALE OF WHITE HORSE GROUP

Date assessed/re-assessed	20 Aug 2024
Work operation	Using a SAW / LONG HANDLED LOPPER for cutting overhanging trees and branches
Assessor's name & designation	Patrick Rosum, VPV Coordinator

Event	Safe working practice
Before sawing commences	Although this code of practice refers specifically to bow saws (BS) it is also for the use of any type of saw / long handled lopper when cutting overhead branches and trees. A saw/ long handled lopper must only be used for cutting overhead vegetation when there is at least one other volunteer present. Assess whether and how the branch/tree can be safely removed by the VPV. If it is not safe to do, don't do it. Instead report the issue to OCC Countryside Access. If you deem that you can safely remove the branch/tree then you and the assistant must wear a safety helmet, and gloves. Ensure that 'People at work' warning signs are in place. Make yourself aware of where a first aid kit will be located. Normally these are located at the 'people at work sign'. Check for the presence of objects e.g. wire, bottles, stones, faeces and stinging insects within or around any vegetation that needs to be cut. Check for loose branches that might become dislodged. Establish the drop zone for the branch/tree. The assistant to the BS operator (BSO) should act as banksman in order to keep all those not working on the branch/tree, and members of the public, well beyond the drop zone.
Operating the BS	The BSO and assistant should have good balance at all times, feet firmly on the ground, and not over-reaching. The BSO must stop sawing when others, with the exception of the assistant, approach to within 15 metres. The BSO should continue to check for the presence of objects e.g. wire, bottles, stones, faeces and stinging insects within and around the vegetation at subsequent tasks. Continue to check for loose branches that might become dislodged.
Members of the public or other volunteers approaching BSO	Volunteers should alert one another of an approaching person. Volunteer (banksman) nearest the BSO asks a person to stop as they get near 15 metres from the BSO. Banksman attracts the attention of the BSO by calling to them, whilst keeping out of the drop zone. BSO stops work until the person has passed to 15 metres beyond them. Notwithstanding, a BSO should look around them every few seconds to see if a volunteer or member of the public is approaching the drop zone.
Fuel storage	If power tools are being used by others, check that any fuel container is not within the drop zone.
Cutting/moving branches/trees on the ground	Only lift these up if there is a sufficient number of you, that each is suitably fit for the task, and use safe lifting technique. If necessary, saw the branch/tree into shorter pieces prior to moving it.

