



National Saw Program Facts Sheet

June 2024

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for chainsaw leg protection

Per Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2358, all chainsaw operators, regardless of power head type (gas or battery) or operating environment (wildland fire or non-wildland fire), are required to use chainsaw leg protection that meets the ASTM F-1897 standard. This standard applies to all cut-resistant leg protection, such as apron style chaps or pants, sold over the counter in the United States. Compliance with this standard offers a wide range of leg protection options for non-fire saw operations.

Wildland Fire Leg Protection Requirement

New guidance in the 2024 version of the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations, e.g. the Red Book, (Chapter 7, Safety and Risk Management) directs all wildland fire chainsaw operators to wear leg protection that meets the National Fire Protection Association standard (NFPA) 1977. We recognize that this conflicts with current FSM 2358.07c-Exhibit 02, which requires "Chaps meeting the requirements of Forest Service specifications 6170-4". In the interim, the Forest Service recognizes NFPA 1977 leg protection as appropriate PPE.

- Leg protection (e.g. chaps meeting the Forest Service Specification 6170-4) currently used by the Forest Service in fire operations meet the NFPA-1977 standards. These products are required to have materials that are melt-resistant when exposed to high heat levels, ensuring enhanced safety for firefighters in challenging conditions. Forest Service employees operating chainsaws in the wildland fire environment will continue to wear issued leg protection.
- The National Forest Service Saw Policy is being reviewed for updates, specifically regarding the PPE standard for leg protection, to ensure that the policy aligns with the updated guidance in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations. If you have any questions or need help navigating the policy updates, please reach out to your Regional Saw Program Manager for assistance.



Non-Fire Leg Protection Requirements

All chainsaw chaps and saw pants that are professionally manufactured and sold over the counter are ASTM 1897 certified and are approved for non-wildland fire Forest Service use. For non-wildland fire chainsaw leg protection PPE requirements please continue to refer to the existing direction outlined in Forest Service Saw Policy FSM2358.07c – Exhibit 01 Non-fire PPE Requirements for Saw Use.

Saw Training Requirements

Nationally Recognized Sawyer Training Courses. To operate saws for wildland fire management and recreation related project work on NFS lands, an individual must complete one of the two Nationally Recognized Sawyer Training Courses (NRSTC) approved by the USDA Forest Service:

- National Wildfire Coordination Group’s (NWCG) S-212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw Course
- USDA Forest Service’s “Developing Thinking Sawyers” (DTS) Course

Both these courses are closely aligned and currently meet the standards outlined in the NWCG Position Qualification Requirement in Publication Management System (PMS) 310-1. The Developing Thinking Sawyers training is divided into modules to accommodate different types of chainsaw and crosscut saw certifications. A sawyer training to use a chainsaw during wildfire response or other incidents is required to take different modules than a sawyer training to use a crosscut saw for trail work. The matrix in Table 1 identifies which modules are required for specific certifications.

Table 1. Matrix of training modules required for different certification types.

Module Needed	Chainsaw bucking	Chainsaw felling	Incident Qualifications (Wildland and Prescribed Fire Operations)	Crosscut saw bucking	Crosscut saw felling
1.0 Introduction to Saw Operations	X	X	X	X	X
2.1 Chainsaw Basics	X	X	X		
2.2 Bucking and Limbing	X	X	X		
2.3 Felling		X	X		
3.1 Crosscut Saw Basics				X	X
3.2 Bucking and Limbing				X	X
3.3 Felling					X
4.0 Ax Basics, Maintenance, and Use				X	X
5.0 Fireline Operations			X		
6.0 Wedges					
7.0 Hung-up Trees	X	X	X	X	X

S-212 Wildland Fire Chainsaws equivalency and “Developing Thinking Sawyers.” For sawyers that participate in incident response and maintain qualifications in NWCG Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications or the Forest Service Fire and Aviation



Qualification Guide (FSFAQG) a certificate of completion for S-212 shall be issued to anyone who has successfully completed the Fireline Module package in a “Developing Thinking Sawyers” course, as proof of completion is required for incident qualifications. See table 2 for skill equivalencies. DTS currently meets the standards outlined in NWCG Position Qualification Requirement in PMS 310-1. The DTS Fireline Module package includes:

- Module 1 Introduction to Saw Operations.
- Module 2.1 Chainsaw Basics, Maintenance, and Operation.
- Module 2.2 Chainsaw Brushing, Limbing and Bucking.
- Module 2.3 Chainsaw Directional Felling.
- Module 5 Fireline Operations.
- Module 7 Hung-up Trees.

Table 2. Sawyer Skill Level Equivalencies for Forest Service and NWCG Incident Positions

Non-Fire Sawyer Certification Level	NWCG Incident Positions
A Faller	Basic Faller (FAL3)
B Faller	Intermediate Faller (FAL2)
C Faller	Advanced Faller (FAL1)



Key National Saw Program 2024 Program of Work Items:

- **Updates to the National Saw Policy, Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2358.** The current policy was published March 6, 2023 and is available on the [Forest Service Directives Web site](#). A working group of Regional Saw Program Managers is reviewing and amending the USFS National Saw Policy to update several developments, specifically the standard change regarding authorized leg protection for our firefighters, as well as adding and clarifying definitions as well as addressing several discrepancies in required agreement language with volunteer and partner organizations involved in saw operations on National Forest System Lands.
- **"Developing Thinking Sawyers" equivalency to S-112, S-212, S-312.** The National Saw program is working with NWCG to better align the "Developing Thinking Sawyers" curriculum and S-112, S-212, S-312 as they are released. Over the next several years NWCG is transitioning from a single training program "Standards for Wildland Fire Chainsaw Operations, S-212", course (2012) to three courses that are designed to provide the right amount of instruction at the correct time and to provide continued learning as a chainsaw operators knowledge and skillset progress. The new curriculum will include Basic Faller, S-112; Intermediate Faller, S-212; and Advanced Faller, S-312 with associated Position Task Books (PTB).
- **Upcoming NWCG courses.** Basic Faller, S-112 was created by a curriculum subcommittee with representation from National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS), including two Regional Saw Program Managers. S-112 has gone through two BETA tests; first in Florida (February 2024) and second in California (June 2024) Following these tests final edits to the curriculum will be made with a tentative release date for S-112 prior to the 2025 season. Intermediate Faller, S-212 will begin following S-112 publication. The S-212 curriculum subcommittee will have representation from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NPS, BLM, USFS, and a State representative.