

March 2016



WIDOW MAKERS:

Widow makers are listed as one of “The 7 harms of tree felling”, and we had several incidents plus 1 serious harm accident recorded in 2015 and a couple already this year.

In 2015 a faller was serious injured when the tree he was felling dislodged a sailor (widow maker) from the tree behind. The faller retreated along his escape route and he was struck as he observed the tree fall. The faller sustained fractured ribs and a fractured femur and he was off work for 40 plus days

WHAT CAUSES A WIDOW MAKER?

*Heads or branches damaged during felling and have hung up.
Heads or branches broken off from strong winds and hung up.
Multiple heads or branches inter tangled with vines, and
Last winter especially damage caused by heavy snow falls.*

BEFORE FELLING WIDOW MAKERS:

Firstly, you need to consider, have you got the:

- Skills
- Experience
- Equipment
- Unit standards and

Are you competent and confident to safely tackle this job?

WHAT ARE THE OPTION?

- Can a machine safely access, assist or fell?
- Can you safely fell this tree using the conventional method?
- Are you able to select and use a driver to dislodge the widow maker?
- Are you able to select and use a tree to drive onto the tree and the widow maker?
- Or is it in the too hard basket, call for assistance, second opinion (observer or an experienced faller)

YOUR PLAN:

1. Whichever method you decide to use, call for an observer.
2. The observer must have some tree felling knowledge, have a RT and carry additional wedges.
3. Check communication between yourself and the observer are clear.
4. Discuss and agree on the plan.

FOLLOW THE 5 STEP FELLING PLAN

5. Ensure your observer is at a safe distance and can see the top of the tree
6. Individual tree and other surrounding tree assessment is a must.
7. Clear an escape route, on the safe side, the longer the escape route the better, (longer than 4m).
8. If you are going to do a tree drive, also clear around your driver and escape route before continuing.
9. Call it in, even if you are not going to do a drive, this is still a highly dangerous situation.
10. Standing on the safe side, make your cuts.
11. Continually look up.
12. Insert your wedge firmly into your back cut, do not drive the wedge hard (you could dislodge the widow maker as soon as the tree is jarred or vibrated)
13. Continually look up.
14. Complete your cuts and as the tree moves, quickly exit along your escape route and maintain a visual
15. If you are going to do a drive, again quickly exit along the escape route to your driver and maintain a visual
16. Finally don't forget to call in once completed

REMEMBER to LOOK UP AND LIVE



