

1/10/2019

Wood Chipper Fatality

7 September 2019

Incident overview

A group of workers were felling branches and vegetation at a school in Lindfield. A male worker was feeding the branches into a wood chipper when he was pulled into the machine, sustaining fatal injuries.



Photo of the wood chipper and truck involved in the incident on site

The investigation

- SafeWork NSW inspectors responded to the incident and attended the site.
- SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

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Safety Information

Businesses are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) and [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#).

Businesses must consider 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risk of tree trimming and removal work.

Control measures that may prevent a similar incident include:

- Conducting pre-start checks, to ensure equipment and systems are working correctly.
- Making sure nothing is entangled in material before it's fed into the wood chipper.
- Keeping unnecessary ropes away from the work area.
- Ensuring emergency stops and control bar are functioning properly.
- Operating the wood chipper according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensuring teams consist of at least two competent workers, who have been given specific training on the individual machine being used
- Feeding branches off the centre line. Where reasonably practicable, the operator feeding the branches into the wood chipper should do so from the side.
- Using a 'push-stick' at least 1.5 metres long, to feed shorter material into the machine.
- Stopping the rollers before reaching into the chute.
- Making sure the wood chipper is never left unattended while operating.

Further information

- [Code of practice for the amenity tree industry](#)
- [Tree work webinar](#)
- [Guide to managing risks of tree trimming and removal work](#)
- [Tree work self-assessment checklist](#)
- [Safety alert – working safely with trees](#)