

# Chainsaw Cross Cutting and Manual Stacking

Irish Forestry Safety Guide  
(IFSG)  
304



## Introduction

This leaflet covers the safe working practices to be used when cross-cutting and stacking timber. For guidance on personal protective equipment (PPE), the machine, preparing to work, maintenance, fuelling and starting procedures see IFSG leaflet 301 Using petrol-driven chainsaws.

You can use this leaflet, along with the chainsaw manufacturer's handbook, as part of the risk assessment process to help identify the controls to put in place when cross-cutting and stacking.

You must also assess the effect of the site and the weather as well as following this guidance.

All operators must have had appropriate training in how to operate the machine and how to carry out the tasks required.

## Preparing to cross-cut and stack

- 1 Clear any debris that is likely to interfere with the crosscutting process.
- 2 Plan the work so that the lightest produce moves furthest.

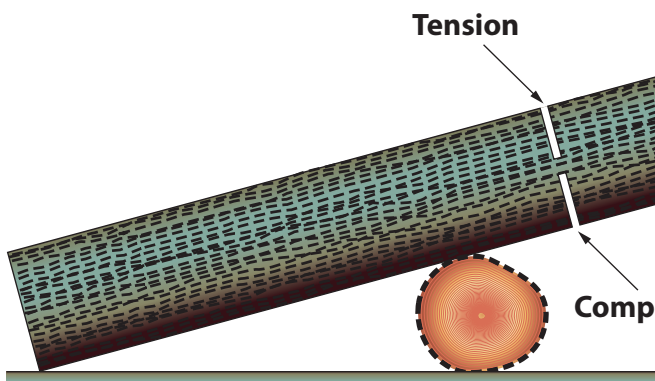


Figure 1: Identification of tension and compression wood

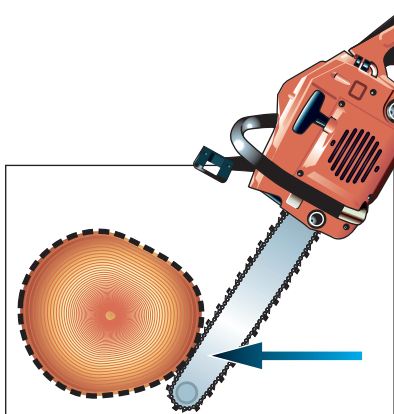
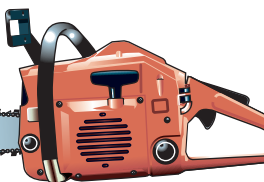
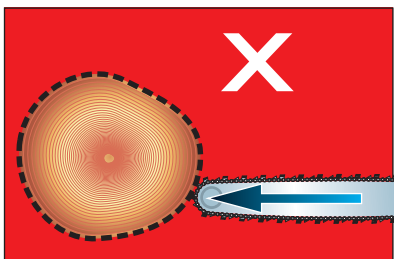


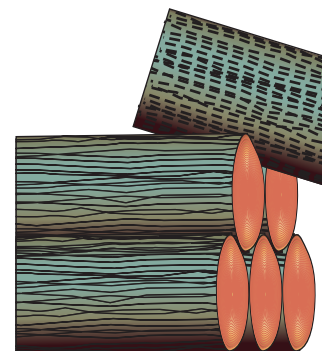
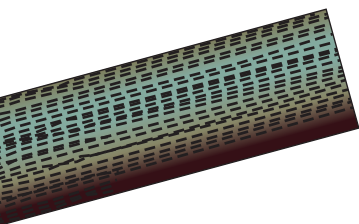
Figure 2: Start of boring cut



**3** Use bearers or other supports where possible.

**4** Ensure a good firm footing at the work area.

**5** A length of timber should only be broken down into sections by one person at any one time.



ression

**6** Ensure that a safe working distance is maintained between workers (at least 5m) and between workers and machinery (outside the risk zone of the machines being used).

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**7** Maintain a secure and balanced stance.

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**8** When cross-cutting on slopes, work on the uphill side of logs if there is a risk of the timber rolling.

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**9** Reduce excessive tension by first making a cut on the compression side of the log (see Figure 1).

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**10** When it is necessary to use a boring cut, do not start with the tip of the guide bar and ensure that it does not strike other stacked material as this can cause kickback (see Figure 2).

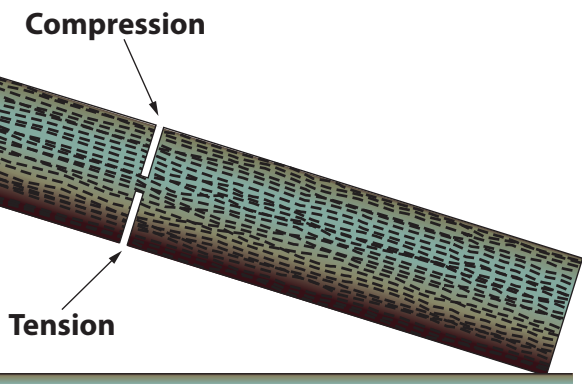
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**11** If the chainsaw jams, switch it off. Pull the chainsaw gently to see if it can be dislodged, otherwise use the correct aid tools to open the cut.

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**12** Be ready to step back quickly if the log being cut starts to roll.

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## Manual handling and stacking

- 13 Follow best practice when manual handling.
- 14 Use appropriate aid tools for lifting and moving timber, for example, pulp hooks, lifting tongs, cant hooks and pickaroons.
- 15 Stack cut material frequently so that it does not create a hazard underfoot.
- 16 Stacks of timber should always be made and maintained in a stable condition. Do not stack on steep ground at the roadside.
- 17 Where stacks are manually produced, the height of the stacked timber should not exceed 1m.
- 18 Take special care in areas frequented by the public. Where appropriate, although not a substitute for safe stacking, a warning sign conforming to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (amended in 2010) should be displayed, and/or the site enclosed with hazard warning tape.

### Further Information and Guidance:

Visit our website at **[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)**, telephone our contact centre on **1890 289 389** or email **[wcu@hsa.ie](mailto:wcu@hsa.ie)**

Use BeSMART, our free online risk assessment tool at **[www.besmart.ie](http://www.besmart.ie)**  
Check out our range of free online courses at **[www.hsalearning.ie](http://www.hsalearning.ie)**



## Further reading

Available at [www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Agriculture\\_and\\_Forestry/](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Agriculture_and_Forestry/)

- Code of Practice for Managing Safety and Health in Forestry Operations
- Information on Health and Safety Responsibilities of Forest Landowners who intend to fell their trees
- Guide to Safe Working with Timber and Chainsaws
- Chainsaw Safety Training Advice Information Sheet

### IFSG Leaflets:

- 301 - Using Petrol Driven Chainsaws
- 302 - Basic Chainsaw Felling and Manual Takedown
- 303 - Chainsaw Snedding
- 304 - Chainsaw Cross Cutting and Manual Stacking
- 306 - Chainsaw Clearance of Windblow
- 307 - Chainsaw Felling of Large Trees
- 503 - Extraction by Forwarder
- 603 - Mechanical Harvesting
- 804 - Electricity at Work: Forestry

*In association with*



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This guide sets out evidence of good practice for a specific forestry task. Deviation from the guide should only be considered after a full risk assessment has been undertaken by competent persons. Health and safety obligations MUST be met at all times.

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