



Eastern Area Coordinating Group Operations Working Team

Date: March 15, 2018

Subject: Eastern Area Standards for All-Hazard Sawyer Modules (Revised March 15, 2018)

Issue: Currently there are no national standards for Sawyer Modules. Establishing minimum standards for Sawyer Modules will improve safety for workers in storm-damaged clearing operations.

Background: In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Eastern Area employed more than 40 wildland fire crews – most of which were used for “chainsaw crews” in road clearing operations. While Type-1 and Type-2 hand crews do have minimum standards for sawyers, the skill levels vary widely – and may not even include a qualified Faller 2. Type 1 and Type 2 fire crews are designed and organized for quickly moving through naturally-occurring wildland fuels; to cut and dig fire lines.

“Chainsaw crews” working after hurricanes, tornadoes, ice storms, etc. are exposed to countless numbers of hazard trees, which have been subjected to severe wind, violent bending / twisting and breakage. During falling and bucking operations in storm damaged timber, the complexity of saw operations increases exponentially. During storm clearing operations, almost every tree can be expected to be under some form of tension/compression and ready to explode if improperly cut by an inexperienced sawyer. While the timber may not be overly large in diameter (generally < 24” DBH), they usually present a complex falling / bucking scenario.

The general response in these types of operations has been to order T-1 / T-2 fire crews, which are generally too large to move around in congested areas; and do not come with more than 3-or 4 qualified sawyers. The result is often too many people working on an incident – with too few saws – and/or insufficient skills needed for complex falling and bucking work. An alternative to ordering fire crews is to order “Sawyer Modules”. However, as there are currently no national standards for ordering Sawyer Modules in ROSS, that requires the ordering units to create the standards and build the modules as they are ordered in ROSS.

Eastern Area All-Hazard Sawyer Module Standards

- Module Size - 2 – 4 personnel
- Qualifications
 - Designated Module Leader
 - Minimum of 2 Fallers (Agency qualified for complex falling operations or Faller 1 or 2).
- One saw kit per qualified faller (recommend 24” bar or longer). Kits to include complete set of maintenance tools
- 5-gallons of saw gas (if able to transport)
- 2-dolmars (Sig containers optional)
- 3-gallons bar oil (if able to transport)
- One falling axe per qualified faller
- 2- spare chains per saw

- Falling wedges
- 2-First-aid kits (meeting agency standards)
- Communication (2-portable, programmable radios)
- Agency-provided cellphone recommended – and must be authorized on the resource order.
- Transportation (recommended 4x4 vehicle - must be authorized on the resource order) that can safely carry occupants, equipment and fuel
- GPS unit with US map, Lat./long capabilities or other GPS capable device
- PPE, all appropriate clothing and equipment for the incident and environment.
- Must be self-sufficient for at least 48 hours.
- Purchase card or agency purchase authority is highly recommended for each module.

/s/ Tom Remus

Tom Remus, Chair

Eastern Area Coordinating Group