



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

RTF2017A Prune shrubs and small trees

Release: 1

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Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

This competency standard covers the process of pruning shrubs and small trees. The work is likely to be undertaken from the ground. Aerial pruning from a ladder, an elevated work platform or from climbing ropes and rigging in a tree, are covered in separate units. Pruning work is likely to be carried out under routine supervision with intermittent checking. Competency is demonstrated by the application of knowledge and skills to a range of pruning tasks and roles usually within established enterprise routines.

Application of the Unit

Not applicable.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria

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Element	Performance Criteria
1 Identify pruning requirements	<p>1.1 Plants that require pruning from the ground are identified according to enterprise work procedures.</p> <p>1.2 The purpose and method of pruning are determined according to enterprise work procedures.</p> <p>1.3 Services are located using site plans and in consultation with the supervisor.</p> <p>1.4 Access to the site is determined in consultation with the supervisor.</p> <p>1.5 OHS hazards are identified, risks assessed and reported to the supervisor.</p>
2 Prepare for pruning	<p>2.1 Pruning tools and equipment are selected according to the location, access and size of material to be pruned.</p> <p>2.2 Pre-operational and safety checks are carried out on pruning tools and equipment according to manufacturers specifications and enterprise work procedures.</p> <p>2.3 Pruning tools and equipment are prepared for use.</p> <p>2.4 Suitable safety and personal protective equipment (PPE) is selected, used and maintained.</p>
3 Undertake pruning of shrubs and small trees	<p>3.1 Safety equipment is erected around the pruning site during and between work periods.</p> <p>3.2 Plant material to be pruned or removed is identified according to the pruning program.</p> <p>3.3 The pruning program is undertaken according to enterprise work procedures and OHS requirements.</p> <p>3.4 Pruning tools and equipment are operated safely and effectively.</p>

- 3.5 Where required, **hygiene practices** are observed during pruning operations.
- 4 Complete pruning shrubs and small trees
- 4.1 **Prunings** and waste material removed from the site are disposed of in an environmentally aware and safe manner according to enterprise work procedures.
- 4.2 Correct manual handling techniques are used when lifting or moving heavy loads.
- 4.3 Pruning tools and equipment are cleaned, maintained and stored according to enterprise work procedures.
- 4.4 A **clean and safe area** is maintained throughout and on completion of work.
- 4.5 Work outcomes are recorded or reported to the supervisor according to enterprise work procedures.

Required Skills and Knowledge

Not applicable.

Evidence Guide

What evidence is required to demonstrate competence for this standard as a whole?

Competence in pruning shrubs and small trees requires evidence that a person using appropriate pruning tools and equipment can effectively achieve the desired tree and shrub forms in relation to appearance, capacity and vigour, yield quantities and clearance as required by individual enterprises.

The skills and knowledge required to apply pruning techniques must be **transferable** to different work environments. For example, pruning techniques from the ground are required for a range of stages of plant growth in a number of horticultural industries, including production, amenity horticulture, arboriculture and nurseries. The practical knowledge of techniques used to remove canes in a viticultural enterprise may be applied in a different context to removing wood from roses after flowering in a floricultural enterprise.

What specific knowledge is needed to achieve the performance criteria?

Knowledge and understanding are essential to apply this standard in the workplace, to transfer the skills to other contexts, and to deal with unplanned events. The knowledge requirements for this competency standard are listed below:

1. practical awareness of the principles of pruning and the methods used to achieve plant management goals
2. effects on plant growth, habit and production levels of pruning operations in relation to the purposes of the enterprise
3. the purpose of tools and equipment used for pruning and the correct and safe use and care of these tools and equipment
4. the effect of outdoor climatic conditions (e.g., rain, hail, days of extreme heat and/or wind, or very high ultraviolet radiation), which may prevent or impede pruning programs, or influence the selection of pruning tools, equipment and safety equipment to minimise the hazards presented
5. awareness of the potential public nature of pruning work sites and the hazards and responsibilities associated with working in a publicly accessible situation
6. plant names, growth habits, flowering times and effect of pruning on fruit production
7. hygiene practices and plant health

principles (e.g., CODIT) relevant to pruning.

What specific skills are needed to achieve the performance criteria?

To achieve the performance criteria, appropriate literacy and numeracy levels as well as some complementary skills are required. These include the ability to:

- 8. participate in teams and contribute to team objectives
- 9. understand work procedures
- 10. communicate with team members and supervisor
- 11. calibrate tools, estimate fuel levels, quantities of plant material to be pruned, such as counting buds or flowers to be retained along a branch or cane, and numbers of branches to be retained per plant or bay
- 12. minimise noise and dust to prevent nuisance-level environmental disturbance.

What processes should be applied to this competency standard?

There are a number of processes that are learnt throughout work and life, which are required in all jobs. They are fundamental processes and generally transferable to other work functions. Some of these are covered by the **key competencies**, although others may be added. The questions below highlight how these processes are applied in this competency standard. Following each question a number in brackets indicates the level to which the key competency needs to be demonstrated where 0 = not required, 1 = perform the process, 2 = perform and administer the process and 3 = perform, administer and design the process.

1. How can **communication of ideas and information (1)** be applied?

Ideas and information relating to pruning activities, plant species and growth habits encountered should be discussed with other members of the work team and the supervisor.

2. How can **information be collected, analysed and organised (1)**?

The pruning site and surrounding area should be inspected visually and the information gained discussed with the work team and supervisor.

Enterprise work procedures and site plans should be consulted, interpreted and applied to co-ordinate pruning activities with further clarification sought from the supervisor where necessary.

3. How are **activities planned and organised (1)**?

Equipment, materials and work procedures for pruning will need to be arranged before and between work periods and there may be some responsibility for co-ordinating work with others.

4. How can **team work (1)** be applied?

The pruning program may involve working with other members of a team to complete the program.

5. How can the use of **mathematical ideas and techniques (1)** be applied?

Simple numeracy in relation to shrub, tree and pruned material quantity and working hours, as they apply to daily performance, will be required.

6. How can **problem-solving skills (1)** be applied?

Problems in applying pruning methods to the aims of pruning or varying shrub and tree forms, workplace safety and other team members may arise during the pruning of shrubs and small trees.

7. How can the **use of technology (1)** be

Technology may be applied in the preparation, use and maintenance of pruning

applied?

tools and equipment.

Are there other competency standards that could be assessed with this one?

This competency standard **could** be assessed on its own or in combination with other competencies relevant to the job function.

There is essential information about **assessing this competency standard for consistent performance and where and how it may be assessed**, in the Assessment Guidelines for this Training Package. All users of these competency standards must have **access** to the **Assessment Guidelines**. Further advice may also be sought from the relevant **sector booklet**.

Range Statement

Range of Variables

The Range of Variables explains the contexts within which the performance and knowledge requirements of this standard may be assessed. The scope of variables chosen in particular training and assessment requirements may depend on the work situations available

What **enterprise work procedures** may apply to this standard?

Work procedures will be based on sound horticultural pruning principles and practices and may include supervisors oral or written instructions, the pruning program, enterprise standard operating procedures (SOPs), specifications, routine maintenance schedules, work notes; manufacturers service specifications and operators manuals; waste disposal, recycling and re-use guidelines; and OHS procedures.

For what **purpose** may shrubs and small trees be pruned?

The goals of pruning may include to shape, form, correct or control growth, prevent disease or damage, promote health, control capacity and vigour, manage the canopy and fruit and flower production, provide ornamental effects or aesthetic appeal, and provide clearance for services, access or cultural practices.

What **services** may need to be located?

Services may include above ground outlets for water supply, irrigation fittings, low overhead power (electricity) and telecommunications lines.

How may **OHS hazards** be identified?

Hazards may be identified through visual inspection of the area, understanding of site plans, and enterprise work procedures.

What **OHS hazards** may be associated with pruning shrubs and small trees?

Hazards may include disturbance or interruption of services, solar radiation, dust, noise, manual handling, moving powered equipment parts, sharp tools and equipment, uneven surfaces, and flying and falling objects.

What or who may be at **risk** from OHS hazards?

Hazards may pose a risk to workers, equipment, people and animals external to the workplace (such as members of the public, stray pets and wildlife) and the natural environment.

What ground based pruning tools and equipment may be used?	Tools and equipment may include ropes, handsaws, hand and battery-powered secateurs, pneumatic snips and compressor, hedge trimmers both manual and powered, small chainsaws and chippers.
What preparation may be required before use of pruning tools and equipment?	Preparation may include sharpening, cleaning and oiling.
What safety equipment may be required?	Safety equipment may include signage and barriers.
What personal protective equipment (PPE) may be required to undertake pruning of shrubs and small trees?	Personal protective equipment may include hat, boots, overalls, gloves, and halter, goggles, respirator or face mask, face guard, hearing protection, sunscreen lotion and hardhat.
What OHS requirements may be relevant to this standard?	OHS requirements may include identifying hazards, assessing and reporting risks, cleaning, maintaining and storing tools and equipment, appropriate use of personal protective equipment including sun protection, drinking to avoid dehydration, safe operation of tools and equipment, correct manual handling, basic first aid, personal hygiene and reporting problems to supervisors.
What hygiene practices may be required while pruning?	Hygiene practices may include sterilisation of tools between prunings of different plants, removal of debris as pruning work is undertaken, washing hands and refraining from smoking to prevent virus transmission.
What materials may prunings include?	Prunings may include small to medium branches, foliage, leaves, sticks, buds, flowers, fruit, bark, plant debris and chipped material.
How may a clean and safe area be maintained?	Tasks may include keeping public access paths and roads clear of debris, waste, tools and equipment, disabling tools and equipment after use, using signage and barriers where necessary and removing debris and waste from the work area swiftly and efficiently.

For more information on contexts, environmental implications and variables for training

and assessment refer to the Sector Booklet.

Unit Sector(s)

Not applicable.