City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate of Competence in Aerial Tree Pruning (0039-31)

September 2025 Version 1.5

Assessment Pack – Centre and Candidate Version

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.0	First version	
1.1 August 2021	Assessor instructions updated	Introduction
1.2 October 2021	AO name added to qualification title	Throughout
1.3 September 2022	Formatting changes Updated logo Updated 'Sources of general information'	Throughout Front cover Appendix 2
1.4 March 2025	Formatting changes	Throughout
1.5 September 2025	ROA paragraph updated, reference to ARAS form removed.	Introduction

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Introduction

This assessment relates to the unit in the Qualification handbook. The assessment can be achieved at pass only. If any task is not yet met the candidate is unsuccessful.

This assessment is for unit 302 Aerial tree pruning covering the following learning outcomes:
1. Carry out aerial tree pruning

General guidance on the requirements for assessment can be found in the Assessor Guidance document available on the City & Guilds web site **www.nptc.org.uk**

The assessor must complete the Practical Table mark sheet for each candidate which should be kept by the assessor for a minimum period of twelve months.

Record of assessment (ROA)
A prepopulated record of assessment must be completed by the assessor following an assessment and returned to the centre within two working days.

Assessment Time
The expected assessment time for this qualification is 3.5 – 4 hours.

Site/workshop requirements:
Trees of sufficient size and form to enable all assessment criteria to be assessed

Equipment/Machinery:
LOLER compliant Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) if used
LOLER compliant climbing equipment with documented evidence, for the Candidate and the Assessor
Top handled or rear handled Chainsaw (max guide bar 15 inch) with maintenance tools
Hand pruning tools
First aid kit

Consumables:
Fuel and chainsaw oil

This is not an open book assessment, however additional technical information may be sought from the relevant manufacturer's operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Practical observation descriptor table

302 Aerial tree pruning

Activity number and description from check list		Assessment criteria
1.	Identify the hazards, risks and controls associated with the site, task and machine	Identify hazards, risks and controls relevant to the site task and machine
2.	Explain the emergency procedures relevant to the site	Emergency procedures relevant to the work site
3.	State industry guides relevant to aerial tree pruning	Industry guides relevant to aerial tree pruning: • AA Technical Guide 1 Tree climbing and aerial rescue • AA Technical Guide 2 Use of tools in a tree • AA Technical Guide 5 Use of Mobile elevating work platforms in tree work • Tree work recommendations BS3998
4.	Describe the potential environmental damage that could occur and how to respond appropriately	Potential environmental damage may include: • damage to retained trees • contamination of watercourses • wildlife disturbance Appropriate responses may include: • containment and clearance of spills • good housekeeping, use of spill mats • work sequence chosen to minimise subsequent damage to retained trees • wildlife assessments completed prior to work • other
5.	Describe site zoning in relation to on site preparation	Work site layout factors to consider may include: • work zone: an area where hazards may be encountered • drop zone: an area where it is anticipated materials may fall • exclusion zone: the overall operational area • other

6.	Perform a tree condition assessment of the tree and work at height assessment prior to commencing the work	Potential hazards that may be encountered may include: • evidence of cavities, decay or decay fungi • deadwood and broken branches • dead or flaking bark • v shaped unions • cracks • nesting insects • the presence of power lines or telephone wires • targets and obstacles underneath the tree
7.	Discuss a working at height assessment	Working at height assessment may include: • can the work be carried out from ground level • the use of a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP) to prevent a fall • The use of suitable equipment minimises the distance and consequence of a fall
8.	Explain how the species, condition of trees and time of year affect the work	Species, condition of tree and time of year may affect the work owing to: Species: • brittle timber – loss of control • responses to pruning • other Condition: • dead – loss of control, safety compromised • diseased – biosecurity measures • other Time of year: • some species bleed heavily if pruned at certain times of year • promotion of subsequent disease or infection • other
9.	Explain the basic principles of target pruning and the effect on tree pruning operations	Basic principles of target pruning are to: • simulate the trees natural ability to shed branches • leaves the branch bark ridge and collar intact • allow complete doughnut of callus wood to form • allow protection boundary to develop inside collar • cuts carried out in accordance with industry standard and job specification • other

10.	Explain the precautions that may be taken during re-pollarding of trees	Additional safeguards during re-pollarding of trees could include: • use of supplementary anchor points owing to the possibility of weak branch unions • the use of alternative cutting techniques owing to potentially excessive tension and compression in timber i.e. v cut, holding cut • use of false anchor to facilitate movement • other
11.	Explain the importance of accurate and appropriate cuts when removing branch material	Importance of accurate and appropriate cuts when removing branch material may include: • control • preventing splitting • preventing tearing • job specification BS3998 are met • other
12.	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of pruning tools to the selected pruning operations	Pole set: • advantage - light work can be carried out from the ground • disadvantage - may be hard to maintain correct angle for correct target pruning Hand saw: • advantage - accurate and neater cuts acheived • disadvantage - can be hard work in large branches Secateurs: • advantage - make a cleaner neater cut • disadvantage - can get stuck into larger branches Hand loppers: • advantage - can be designed with mechanical advantage for operator ease • disadvantage – two-handed operation Chainsaw: • advantage - can be used on much larger diameter timber • disadvantage - inherent risk to operator
13.	Inspect all access/tree climbing equipment to ensure it is safe and fit for use under manufacturer's instructions and relevant legislation	Candidate to inspect **all** equipment to be used and comment on the condition/checks made.

14.	Use access and positioning methods appropriate to the tree	All anchor points selected taking into consideration: • size, strength and structure • position in relation to the parts of the tree to be accessed • use of equipment to minimise damage to the tree if appropriate Candidate establishes their initial anchor points taking into account: • suitability of the techniques used • accurate installation of equipment • organisation of ropes • safety and position of the anchor points • testing of the anchor points by thorough loading prior to ascent Technique used takes into account: • efficient use of technique chosen • Operator is attached to the tree at all times in accordance with industry good practice • appropriate selection of anchor points • appropriate route taken up the tree • correct use of systems when changing anchor points • thorough load testing of new anchor points • risk of a fall is managed at all times • correct use of equipment If applicable access and climb tree to anchor points of suitable height and strength in accordance with AA guide TG1. An appropriate MEWP if applicable is set up and used in accordance with AA technical guide TG 5.
15.	Carry out pruning operations in accordance with industry good practice	Crown reduction pruning: The tree is reduced to the agreed specification, taking into account: • sequence of operations • route within the tree crown • communication and control of ground staff • selection of branches for removal • selection of appropriate pruning tool for branch removal • removal of dead, dying and diseased material as appropriate • branches reduced to suitable growth points • height and/ or spread of the tree is reduced to leave a balanced crown • appropriate structure for future crown development • the extent of the work is not to exceed the tolerance of the tree species • accuracy of cuts • position of final pruning cuts • avoidance of damage to the retained parts of the tree • avoidance of damage to surrounding features • no cut branches left hanging in the tree • overall quality of reduction to pruning/job specification • crown density reduced within the tolerance of the tree species

		Crown thinning: The tree is thinned to the agreed specification, taking into account: • sequence of operations • route within the tree crown • communication and control of ground staff • selection of branches for removal • selection of appropriate pruning tool for branch removal • removal of dead, dying, diseased, crossing and rubbing material as appropriate • uniform removal of branches • crown density reduced within the tolerance of the tree species • general overall size and shape of the tree retained • accuracy of cuts • position of final pruning cuts • avoidance of damage to the retained parts of the tree • avoidance of damage to surrounding features • no cut branches left hanging in the tree
16.	Check all arising's are dropped/thrown into planned drop zone without compromising the access equipment or damage any infrastructure	Drop zone used ensuring: • no hanging branches left within tree • access equipment is not compromised/damaged • infrastructure is not damaged
17.	Dispose of waste in line with work specification	All waste produced from activities is disposed of in line with legislation, good practice and/or site requirements
18.	Communicate appropriately with ground staff	Communication between climber and ground staff maintained when appropriate
19.	Applied pruning specification	Pruning specifications executed as per industry good practice and job specification
20.	Used appropriate tools, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE)	All tools, equipment and personal protective equipment is used in line with industry good practice
21.	Carried out work to minimise environmental damage	It is ensured that any possible environmental damage is minimised at all times
22.	Worked in a way which maintains health and safety and is consistent with relevant legislation and industry good practice	All activities must be completed in a way which protects the operator and those around them

Appendix 1 Practical table

302 - Aerial tree pruning

All criteria must be achieved.

Activity number and description	Achieved
1. Identify the hazards, risks and controls associated with the site, task and machine	
2. Explain the emergency procedures relevant to the site	
3. State industry guides relevant to aerial tree pruning	
4. Describe the potential environmental damage that could occur and how to respond appropriately	
5. Describe site zoning in relation to on site preparation	
6. Perform a tree condition assessment of the tree and work at height assessment prior to commencing the work	
7. Discuss a working at height assessment	
8. Explain how the species, condition of trees and time of year affect the work	
9. Explain the basic principles of target pruning and the effect on tree pruning operations	
10. Explain the precautions that may be taken during re-pollarding of trees	
11. Explain the importance of accurate and appropriate cuts when removing branch material	
12. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of pruning tools to the selected pruning operations	
13. Inspect all access/tree climbing equipment to ensure it is safe and fit for use under manufacturer's instructions and relevant legislation	
14. Use access and positioning methods appropriate to the tree	
15. Carry out pruning operations in accordance with industry good practice	
16. Check all arising's are dropped/thrown into planned drop zone without compromising the access equipment or damage any infrastructure	
17. Dispose of waste in line with work specification	
18. Communicate appropriately with ground staff	
19. Applied pruning specification	
20. Used appropriate tools, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE)	
21. Carried out work to minimise environmental damage	
22. Worked in a way which maintains health and safety and is consistent with relevant legislation and industry good practice	

Appendix 2 Sources of general information

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to the ***Centre Document Library*** on ***www.cityandguilds.com*** or click on the links below:

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Handbook
This document is for all approved centres and provides guidance to support their delivery of our qualifications. It includes information on

- Centre quality assurance criteria and monitoring activities
- Administration and assessment systems
- Centre-facing support teams at City & Guilds / ILM
- Centre quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

The Centre Handbook should be used to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Centre Contract.

Quality Assurance Standards: Centre Assessment
This document sets out the minimum common quality assurance requirements for our regulated and non-regulated qualifications that feature centre assessed components. Specific guidance will also be included in relevant qualification handbooks and/or assessment documentation.

It incorporates our expectations for centre internal quality assurance and the external quality assurance methods we use to ensure that assessment standards are met and upheld. It also details the range of sanctions that may be put in place when centres do not comply with our requirements, or actions that will be taken to align centre marking/assessment to required standards. Additionally, it provides detailed guidance on the secure and valid administration of centre-assessments.

Access arrangements - When and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds provides full details of the arrangements that may be made to facilitate access to assessments and qualifications for candidates who are eligible for adjustments in assessment.

The ***Centre Document Library*** also contains useful information on such things as:

- Conducting examinations
- Registering learners
- Appeals and malpractice

Useful contacts
Please visit the Contact Us section of the City & Guilds website, ***Contact us***

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