



NEW ZEALAND AXEMEN'S ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Safety Management Plan

Version 1.1

Issued for the 2026/27 season

About this version.

This is an interim revision of the Safety Management Plan issued on 10 August 2023. It corrects contact details, superseded references and terminology, and removes a statement about the transfer of responsibility that was incorrect at law. The structure and requirements of the 2023 plan are otherwise unchanged.

A full revision, version 2.0, is in development and will add hazard registers, an incident reporting procedure, an expanded emergency plan and provisions for block production. It will be published following the redraft of the Official Rules and Information Guide.

Supersedes the Safety Management Plan issued 10 August 2023

Document control

Field	Detail
Document	NZAA Safety Management Plan
Version	1.1
Owner	Secretary
Approved by	Executive Committee resolution of 1 August 2026
Effective from	1 September 2026
Next review	31 July 2026
Supersedes	Version 1.0, issued 10 August 2023
Distribution	Axemen's News, Sub-Associations, Centres, Clubs, host organisations. The current version is published on the Association website

This plan is reviewed annually, and additionally following any notifiable event, any material change to the Official Rules and Information Guide, or any relevant change in law. The review is minuted whether or not changes result.

Purpose

This Safety Management Plan has been developed to ensure that the activities of the members of the New Zealand Axemen's Association are undertaken in a safe manner. The Association places the personal safety of all members and the safety of the public foremost.

This plan is to be read in conjunction with the Official Rules and Information Guide for Officials and Competitors, the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016. It is every member's responsibility to ensure that the rules and procedures are adhered to so that everyone's safety can be assured.

The Association's duty of care extends to its registered members, volunteers, visitors, customers and members of the public.

Note on responsibility.

The 2023 version of this plan stated that responsibility passed to the competitor once a warning had been given. That statement has been removed. Duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 cannot be transferred or contracted out, and more than one person or organisation may hold the same duty at the same time. Warning a competitor does not discharge anyone else's responsibility.

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following definitions apply.

Term	Meaning
NZAA	New Zealand Axemen's Association: a sports association whose members carry out high risk events in public places

Term	Meaning
Axeman or Competitor	A sportsperson who competes in high risk events using axes, cross cut saws and chainsaws within a public area
Visitor	Any person who visits a chopping event and is allowed within the axemen's arena (refer to section 15)
Sub-Association	The Northland, Northern, Central and Southern Axemen's Associations, as defined in the Constitution
Centre and Club	As defined in the Constitution

2. Reference documents

Held at legislation.govt.nz:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016

Held at worksafe.govt.nz:

- Safe practice for forestry and harvesting operations — Approved Code of Practice, August 2025
- Good practice guidelines for owners of small forests

Held at nzaxemen.org.nz:

- NZAA Official Rules and Information Guide for Officials and Competitors

The Approved Code of Practice for Safety and Health in Forestry Operations, cited in the 2023 version, was revoked and replaced in August 2025. The forestry references are relevant to the felling and cross-cutting of timber for competition and training blocks. Provisions for that activity will be included in version 2.0.

3. NZAA contacts

Role	Name	Contact
President	Darcell Apelu	President@nzaxemen.org.nz
Vice-President	Shane Campbell	Vicepresident@nzaxemen.org.nz
Secretary / Treasurer	Angela Thomas	Secretary@nzaxemen.org.nz

These addresses are for correspondence. They are not an emergency contact route. On the day of an event, the contacts that matter are the Ring Marshal and the host organisation contact, both of which are recorded before competition begins under section 10. Reporting outside an event is to the President of the relevant Sub-Association under section 5.

4. Overview

This Safety Management Plan applies to all members of the Association and to any other parties involved with the Association. It contains information that should be read and understood in conjunction with the

Official Rules and Information Guide. Development and review of this plan is undertaken annually, or as required to meet any necessary changes.

4.1 Communication of the plan

The Association has overall responsibility for ensuring that the contents of this plan are communicated to all members prior to the commencement of the chopping season, and that those concerned are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities. Sub-Associations are responsible for ensuring that their members are fully aware of their responsibilities leading up to and during chopping competitions or any other chopping event. The Ring Marshal is responsible for ensuring that the safety rules in the Official Rules and Information Guide, and any local safety rules, are followed.

4.2 Implementation of the plan

The Association publishes this plan and expects Sub-Associations to follow it. The Association distributes the plan to all Sub-Associations and advises them of any change.

Sub-Associations are expected to apply this plan for the duration of all competitions, including ensuring that the key activities detailed in this plan are undertaken in a safe manner by the persons specified.

5. Duty of care

- The Association places safety first. Every member has a duty of care to ensure that no one is harmed as a result of any person's actions or inactions
- This duty of care includes the prompt reporting of unsafe practices or conditions, any deviation from Association requirements, and rectifying unsafe practices or conditions immediately. This applies to all members
- Reporting at an event is to the Ring Marshal, and is documented
- Reporting outside an event is to the President of the relevant Sub-Association, and is documented

5.1 Unsafe practices or conditions

All unsafe practices and conditions must be brought to the attention of the Ring Marshal in the first instance, as soon as possible, so that the issues identified can be promptly and appropriately addressed.

5.2 Deviation from Association requirements

- All competitions are undertaken in accordance with the processes and procedures in the Official Rules and Information Guide and the requirements of this plan
- Deviation from those requirements or from this plan may only be made in the case of an emergency or in the interest of safety

5.3 Continual improvement

As part of the Association's commitment to continually improve health and safety, all members are encouraged to play an active role by identifying inconsistencies, incorrect practices or procedures, and suggesting ways health and safety could be improved.

6. Public interaction

- Everyone should be friendly, approachable and professional when interacting with the public
- No member will bring the Association into disrepute with inappropriate behaviour
- Public safety must not be endangered by chopping events

- Members should not be endangered by the actions or inaction of a member of the public
- Any complaints or compliments must be brought to the attention of the Ring Marshal

7. Drug and alcohol free policy

- The Association has zero tolerance concerning drugs and alcohol within the chopping arena.
Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 2.12
- Any person within the chopping arena who the Ring Marshal reasonably believes to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol shall be directed to leave the arena immediately and will be escorted from the arena
- This is an on-the-day safety measure and carries no disciplinary consequence of itself. Where the Ring Marshal considers that disciplinary action is warranted, the matter is referred to the Sub-Association and dealt with under the Constitution

Anti-doping is a separate matter governed by the Constitution and by the Sports Anti-Doping Rules administered by the Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Raunui. Nothing in this section affects those rules.

8. Training

Any training carried out within the chopping arena is under the direction of the Ring Marshal, who determines how it will be safely carried out. Only trainers are allowed to remain in the arena during an event to assist trainees while chopping.

9. Risk management

- The Ring Marshal has overall responsibility to ensure that hazards and risks are managed, and that required corrective actions are communicated to the axemen before or during the chopping event
- A pre-chopping meeting is held with all competitors to reinforce the rules and to check all axes before chopping commences. No axeman is to participate if their axe has not been checked
- Protective equipment required of competitors while competing is specified in the Official Rules and Information Guide

10. Emergency plan

The Ring Marshal must ensure that a fully stocked and up to date first aid kit is available before any chopping commences, and that there is at least one first aider on site at all times for the duration of the event.

Before competition begins the Ring Marshal must also confirm and record:

- The site address to give a 111 operator
- The ambulance access route to the arena, and who opens the gate
- Who will make the call, and a backup
- That mobile coverage is available at the arena, or what alternative means of communication will be used

Where a serious injury occurs, activity in the arena is stopped, the first aider attends the casualty, 111 is called if required, and the scene is not disturbed except as necessary to assist the injured person or make the site safe. The Ring Marshal notifies the Sub-Association and the host organisation without delay.

11. Arena safety management protocols

11.1 Ring Marshal

The Ring Marshal shall ensure that the health and safety protocols set out in this plan are fully understood, implemented and followed by the axemen and other participating parties for the duration of the event.

The Referee may hold the role of Ring Marshal. Where the Referee does not hold the role, the Sub-Association identifies who does before the event commences.

12. Arena security

Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.27.2

- All sites shall be secured using either permanent or temporary fencing of a minimum of one metre high around the perimeter of the arena, to prevent unauthorised access into the chopping area
- Under no circumstances shall a member of the public, including children, be allowed into the arena
- All members of the clean-up crew must be given the all clear before they are permitted to enter the arena
- The use of axes for block preparation is prohibited whilst the clean-up crew is working within 4 metres of their stand
- Testing axes should be undertaken in a designated safe area away from the arena
- No axemen other than those coaching or assisting with the jigger boards are allowed into the arena during an event. All other persons must clear the arena and stay within the designated safety zone

13. Chopping requirements

Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.27

- All axes must be checked before use. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.27.6
- All axe heads are to be pinned. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.27.1
- All cradle and dummy spacings shall be not less than 3.6 metres between centres, and not less than 3.6 metres from the ring fence. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.27.6

13.1 Chainsaw use

Only authorised operators will be permitted to operate a chainsaw, and those operators must wear the correct personal protective equipment. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.28.

14. Warning and safety signage

- Safety signage may be installed at the access points for the arena, at the discretion of the Ring Marshal
- The safety signage may indicate restricted areas, exclusion zones or safe areas

15. Visitors

- All visitors to the arena shall be made aware of the safety requirements by the Ring Marshal. A visitor may be accompanied as determined by the Ring Marshal
- All visitors must comply with Association and on-site safety requirements

16. Arena housekeeping

In the interests of safety, all competitors are responsible for arena housekeeping and are required to maintain a high standard of housekeeping at all times.

Rubbish is the responsibility of the person creating it. It shall be removed from site and recycled where possible.

17. Personal protective equipment

The correct personal protective equipment shall be worn at all times when operating a chainsaw, and at any other time when personal protective equipment is expected to be worn in alignment with New Zealand legislation.

Protective equipment required of competitors while competing is specified in the Official Rules and Information Guide. This plan does not restate or vary those requirements.

17.1 Correct equipment for chainsaw use

Helmet, eye protection, hearing protection, leg protection, safety boots and a high visibility top.
Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 3.28.

18. Plant and equipment

All axes, cross cut saws, plant and equipment used for the purposes of an event must meet the Association's required safety standards. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide, Section 3.

19. Removal from site

- The Association reserves the right to remove any person from a chopping event or arena if their safety or the safety of others may be compromised by the actions or inactions of that person
- The Association reserves the right to remove any person because of a breach of the Association's rules or conduct requirements. Reference: Official Rules and Information Guide 2.15

Removal from site under this section is an immediate safety measure. Any disciplinary consequence beyond the day is a matter for the Sub-Association or the Committee under the Constitution.

Change log

Version	Date	Change
1.0	10 Aug 2023	Original issue

Version	Date	Change
1.1	[date]	Interim revision. Contacts updated. Statement transferring responsibility to competitors on warning removed. Revoked forestry Approved Code of Practice reference replaced with the August 2025 code. Terminology aligned to the Constitution. Section 11 completed. Removal and drug and alcohol provisions distinguished from disciplinary process. Minimum emergency information requirements added at section 10. Competitor protective equipment provisions removed from sections 9 and 17 and referred to the Official Rules and Information Guide, which is where they belong and where they will not conflict with a second document. Document control and review date established. Requirements otherwise unchanged from version 1.0.
