



Standard Practice for Treestand Instructions¹

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1. Scope

1.1 This practice provides guidance for providing user instructions for treestands.

1.2 The values stated in inch-pound units are to be regarded as standard. The values given in parentheses are mathematical conversions to SI units that are provided for information only and are not considered standard.

1.3 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. Terminology

2.1 The terminology and definitions in the referenced documents are applicable to this practice.

2.2 Definitions:

2.2.1 *backbar or V-bar, n*—the adjustable component of a climbing treestand or handclimber that engages the tree to provide support. The backbar may be rigid or flexible.

2.2.2 *climbing stick, n*—a device to assist climbing a tree primarily to a fixed position treestand. A structure that is secured to the tree and allows the user to support his weight and climb to the desired height on the tree.

2.2.3 *climbing treestand, n*—a treestand that provides both the means to ascend the tree, and allow the user to remain at a desired elevation.

2.2.4 *handclimber, or climbing aid, n*—a device to assist climbing with a climbing treestand. A structure that allows the user to support his weight when lifting a climbing treestand with his legs.

2.2.5 *ladder treestand, n*—a treestand that consists of a ladder with an attached platform and is secured to the tree at the elevation where the platform is located.

2.2.5.1 *Discussion*—The ladder treestand may be secured to

the tree at other locations and has steps that are used to reach the platform or hunting position.

2.2.6 *non-climbing, fixed position or hang-on treestand, n*—a treestand that is secured to the tree at the elevation where it is used.

2.2.6.1 *Discussion*—The user usually ascends the tree by some means and then lifts the treestand to the desired position and secures it for use.

2.2.7 *platform, n*—the horizontal structural area of a treestand on which the user stands or places his feet, or both.

2.2.8 *treestand, n*—a device designed to be affixed to a tree or its branches so as to permit an individual to sit or stand thereon for the purpose of attaining an elevated position from which to observe, photograph or hunt.

2.2.9 *tripod or tower stand, n*—a tripod or tower stand (free standing platform) is constructed to be self-supporting and is not required to be secured to a tree.

2.2.10 *suspension relief device, n*—a device to allow relief of a person's weight on the lower extremities if suspended in a harness.

2.2.10.1 *Discussion*—The device is to help maintain circulation in the legs and help prevent suspension trauma (blood pooling).

3. Summary of Practice

3.1 This practice provides minimum guidelines for instructions for treestands particularly for quality assurance and adequacy of safety.

4. Significance and Use

4.1 This practice is provided to develop and maintain uniformity in practices for instructions for treestands, particularly with regard to quality assurance and safety.

4.2 It is emphasized that the use of these practices will not alter the validity of data determined with specific tests related to other standards.

5. Procedure

5.1 It is recommended that manufacturers follow the methods of developing instructions so described herein. When

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unusual or special conditions require instructions or information not covered herein, the manufacturer shall be responsible for their development to assure adequate information for the user.

5.2 All user instructions shall be in English, and included with each unit.

5.2.1 In addition to model specific written instructions, Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) or Video Home System (VHS) tape shall provide non-model specific video instructions and safety warnings with each unit treestand or treestand ladder.

5.2.2 Video instructions for harnesses that are separately furnished for a treestand (after market) are exempt from providing instructions specific to the treestand only. However, the proper use of, and warnings for using the harness with all different types of treestands must be shown.

5.3 *Selection of Content:*

5.3.1 Initial, basic safety topics/scenes for written and video instructions shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

5.3.1.1 General treestand safety topics/scenes.

5.3.1.2 The manufacturer's name and address.

5.3.1.3 The unit model identification.

5.3.1.4 The unit weight limit.

5.3.1.5 When hunting from a treestand falls can occur any time after leaving the ground causing injury or death.

5.3.1.6 Always wear a fall arrest system (FAS) comprising a full body harness at all times after leaving the ground. You must stay connected at all times after leaving the ground while using climbing and hang-on treestands. Single safety belts and chest harnesses are no longer allowed and shall never be used. If you are not wearing a full body harness properly attached to the tree that is protecting you from a fall, do not leave the ground.

5.3.1.7 Read and understand all of the manufacturer's Warnings and Instructions and use all safety devices provided by the manufacturer. Contact the manufacturer for any questions. Failure to do so could result in injury or death.

5.3.1.8 Never exceed the total weight limit of the treestand.

5.3.1.9 Never use a treestand during inclement weather such as rain, lightning, windstorms or icy conditions and end your hunt and return to the ground if inclement conditions arise.

5.3.1.10 Never use a treestand while using drugs (even prescription drugs) or alcohol.

5.3.1.11 Never use a treestand while feeling ill, nauseous or dizzy, or if you have a prior medical condition that could cause a problem, that is, heart condition, joints that lock-up, spinal fusions, etc., or if you are not well rested.

5.3.1.12 Never use a treestand on a dead, leaning, diseased or loose barked tree, or a utility pole.

5.3.1.13 Never rely on a tree branch for support.

5.3.1.14 Never jump or bounce on a treestand to seat it to the tree.

5.3.1.15 Pull up a bow, backpack, or firearm or other equipment only after being secure in the treestand and a firearm must be pulled up with it unloaded, chamber open, and muzzle down.

5.3.1.16 Always inform someone of the hunting location, where the treestand will be located and the expected duration of the hunt.

5.3.1.17 A signal device such as a mobile phone, radio, whistle, signal flare or personal locator device (PLD) must be on your person and readily available at all times.

5.3.1.18 Inspect the treestand and all safety devices each time before use and do not store a treestand outdoors when not in use.

5.3.1.19 Never modify your treestand in any way by making repairs, replacing parts, or altering it except if explicitly authorized in writing by the manufacturer.

5.3.1.20 Practice installing, adjusting and using your treestand at ground level prior to using it at elevated positions.

5.3.1.21 Instructions (written and video) shall be kept in a safe place and reviewed at least annually. It is the responsibility of the treestand owner to furnish the complete instructions to any person who borrows or purchases the treestand.

5.3.2 *Climbing Treestands Topics/Scenes:*

5.3.2.1 The initial angle of the platform/climber at ground level must allow for the decrease in tree diameter while ascending by tilting slightly upward.

5.3.2.2 For two-piece climbing treestands the tether connecting the top and the platform must be secure and at the length recommended by the manufacturer.

5.3.2.3 Platform level adjustments shall not be made anywhere except at ground level (except for those special cases of products designed and intended to be safely adjusted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions).

5.3.2.4 While climbing, adjustments to the harness attachment to the tree (tether/tree belt) shall be frequent and coordinated with treestand movement to maintain the least amount of slack in the tether that will allow for climbing.

5.3.2.5 Familiarize yourself with the use of climbers by practicing at ground level before using in a hunting environment.

5.3.3 *Non-climbing (Fixed or Hang-on) Treestands:*

5.3.3.1 The use of a lineman's/climbing belt is required when installing a hang-on treestand to stabilize the user with the tree.

5.3.3.2 Correct tightening and adjustment of chains, cables, straps, etc. are critical to stable hang-on treestand installation. All treestand contact points must be in contact with the tree before you step onto your stand.

5.3.3.3 Practice the attachment of hang-on treestands at ground level before using in a hunting environment.

5.3.3.4 Never leave a treestand in a tree for more than two weeks since weather or animals could cause damage. Tree growth can also stress and damage straps and buckles.

5.3.3.5 Use a haul line to raise and lower the treestand. Never climb with anything on your back.

5.3.3.6 Climbing aids (stick ladders, sectional ladders, steps, etc.) must extend above the platform to allow the user to step down onto the platform. Never step up to your stand from a climbing aid.

5.3.4 *Ladder Treestand and Tripod Topics/Scenes:*

5.3.4.1 Use at least three (3) people to install or take down a ladder treestand.

5.3.4.2 The criss-cross straps and stabilization devices must be attached before climbing to the platform.

5.3.4.3 When installing a ladder stand, always bounce on the first rung to set the ladder into the ground according to manufacturer's instructions before proceeding to climb any higher.

5.3.4.4 Check every ladder section connection every time you use the stand before you leave the ground. If ladder sections are separating, do not use the stand.

5.3.4.5 Check the ground under the stand to make sure it is firm and level. Sloping ground or uneven surface (one side on a rock) can cause your ladder to tilt or shift off the tree as you climb.

5.3.4.6 Maintain three (3) points of contact when climbing a ladder treestand.

5.3.4.7 Always lean forward as you climb and attach your harness to the tree before securing the platform to the tree and stepping onto the platform.

5.3.5 *Fall Arrest System (FAS) and Full Body Harness Topics/Scenes:*

5.3.5.1 Read and understand the manufacturer's warnings, expiration date, and instructions on how to use and how to properly adjust the harness.

5.3.5.2 Practice the use of a full body harness at ground level in the presence of a responsible adult to experience the feeling of hanging suspended before using in a hunting environment.

5.3.5.3 The length of the harness tether shall be minimized at all times. It shall be adjusted so that it is above the head with no slack (snug) in the sitting position and you shall have the minimum amount of slack possible when climbing.

5.3.5.4 Never allow the tether strap to get under your chin or around your neck.

5.3.5.5 Failure to follow harness instructions could result in not being able to return to the stand and being suspended in a harness after a fall. If others are not aware of your hunting location and if your communication efforts are unsuccessful, you must have a personal plan for recovery/escape before you ascend the tree because prolonged suspension in a harness can be fatal. It is important to exercise the legs by pushing against the tree or doing other forms of continuous leg exercises to avoid blood pooling while being suspended. Hunters with varying degrees of physical fitness may require different plans to recover/escape to avoid the effects of prolonged suspension. Have a personal plan and practice it in the presence of a responsible adult before leaving the ground. No one escape/rescue plan will work for every hunter on every tree in every circumstance. Only you can determine the best recovery/escape plan for your hunting situation and you must have a recovery/escape plan for your situation before leaving the ground.

5.3.5.6 A suspension relief device must be on your person and readily accessible while using a harness. This device will allow the user to relieve the load on the lower extremities if suspended in a harness to help maintain circulation in the legs and help mitigate suspension trauma (blood pooling) or allow descent to the ground. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions on the safe use of any suspension relief device.

5.3.5.7 Several optional products/systems are available that offer self-recovery or self extraction from a fall when sus-

pending in a harness. Some systems automatically descend the user while others allow user control. One of these products/systems could be considered for use as an additional safety precaution against prolonged suspension and suspension trauma. Be sure to follow the manufacturers' directions on the safe use of these products/systems.

5.3.5.8 Hunt from the ground when self-recovery/escape ability is absent.

5.3.5.9 There is time to make a correct decision on what action to take if a fall occurs while wearing a full body harness. It is important to remember, "DO NOT PANIC." Remain calm and implement your practiced rescue, relief, and recovery plan.

5.3.6 *Climbing Aids for Hang-on Treestands—Stick Ladders, Sectional Ladders, Steps, etc.:*

5.3.6.1 A full body harness with a lineman's/climbing belt must be worn at all times while installing or removing any hang-on climbing aids.

5.3.6.2 Hang-on climbing aids must be placed on the tree at a height above the platform where the user can maintain a handhold on the unit and step downwards onto the treestand. Never step up from a climbing device to get into your stand.

5.3.6.3 When using a climbing/lineman's belt to ascend the tree, the full body harness shall be attached to the tree before stepping down onto the treestand.

5.3.6.4 Sectional ladders and steps shall be spaced on the tree to insure each step is no more than 18 in. (45.72 cm) apart.

5.3.6.5 Check every stick ladder section connection every time you use the stick ladder before you leave the ground. If stick ladder sections are separating, do not use the stick ladder.

5.4 In addition to the content of 5.3.1 – 5.3.6, basic instructions shall include, but not limited to, the following:

5.4.1 Clear identification of parts or devices mentioned in the instructions.

5.4.2 A clear caution, notification, or warning of any particular or special condition of assembly, adjustment, inspection, or use of the unit that would not be reasonable or obvious, or both, to an inexperienced person.

5.4.3 The instructions shall include information on the method of attaching the treestand to the tree. This shall include the use of photographs or diagrams, or both, to illustrate and further clarify instructions. Any questions about instructions shall be referred to the manufacturer.

5.4.4 The minimum (and maximum, where applicable) tree diameter for proper use shall be specified.

5.4.5 A procedure for adjusting the unit to fit a given tree shall be specified. This shall include the use of photographs or diagrams, or both, to illustrate and further clarify instructions.

5.4.6 For climbing treestands, the instructions shall include information about the method to use in climbing or descending the tree. This shall include the use of photographs or diagrams, or both, to illustrate and further clarify instructions.

5.4.6.1 A notation shall be made in this section of the instructions that the user should use a fall protection device, specifically a full body harness, and a handclimber or climbing aid while climbing or descending. Instructions on the proper use, warnings, and securing the harness to the tree shall be provided either separately or as part of the treestand instructions.

5.4.6.2 Foot placement and foot harness adjustment instructions (where applicable) shall be included within this section.

5.4.7 Instruction shall be given to inform the user of details specific to the unit such as, but not limited to, the following:

5.4.7.1 For units with integral seats, the method or adjustments, or both, required to erect the seat (where applicable).

5.4.7.2 For units with a balance bar, arm rest, gun rest, etc., the method or adjustments, or both, required to erect same (where applicable).

5.4.7.3 For two piece units (without integral seats) such as “stand-up/sit-down” treestands notification shall be given to secure the upper and lower pieces together with a device such as a rope, strap, etc. to eliminate inadvertent separation while in use.

5.4.8 For non-climbing (hang-on and ladder) treestands, the instructions shall include information about the method to install it to a tree. This shall include the use of photographs or diagrams, or both, to illustrate and further clarify written instructions.

5.4.9 The use of a lineman’s/climbing belt shall be presented as a means for stabilizing the user during ascent, descent and the installation of a hang-on treestand.

5.4.10 Instructions shall include information on the proper care and maintenance of the unit. Information shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

5.4.10.1 Notice shall be given that inspection for defects from damage, rot, corrosion, cracks, freezing, excessive heat, etc. before every use is required, and do not use if damage is detected or suspected.

5.4.10.2 Minor maintenance that the manufacturer deems reasonably appropriate for users should be recommended. Examples include, but are not limited to: re-tightening or replacement of hardware (specified and supplied by the manufacturer), replacement of rope, straps, cords, etc. (specified and supplied by the manufacturer), preserving or refinishing wood, touch-up painting, lubrication, etc.

5.4.10.3 Storage or any conditions, or both, that the unit should not be subjected to.

5.5 *Additional Video Content:*

5.5.1 In addition to the content of 5.3.1 – 5.3.6, basic video/scenes shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

5.5.2 Scenes/descriptions of the method of attaching the treestand to the tree.

5.5.3 The minimum (and maximum where applicable) tree diameter for proper use shall be explained.

5.5.3.1 A procedure for adjusting the unit to fit a given diameter tree shall be explained.

5.5.4 For climbing treestands, the scenes/descriptions shall include information about the method to use in climbing or descending the tree.

5.5.4.1 An emphasized point shall be made in this section of the video that the user must use a fall protection device, specifically a full body harness, and a handclimber or climbing aid while climbing or descending the tree.

5.5.4.2 Foot placement and foot to platform means adjustments (where applicable) shall be included within this section.

5.5.5 Instructions shall be given to inform the user of details specific to the unit such as, but not limited to the following:

5.5.5.1 For units with integral seats, the method or adjustments, or both, required to erect the seat (where applicable).

5.5.5.2 For units with a balance bar, arm rest, gun rest, etc., the method or adjustment, or both, required to erect same (where applicable).

5.5.5.3 For two piece units (without integral seats) such as “stand-up/sit-down” treestands scenes/descriptions shall be shown to secure the upper and lower pieces together with a flexible device such as a rope, strap, etc. to eliminate inadvertent separation while in use.

5.5.6 For non-climbing (hang-on and ladder) treestands, the scenes/descriptions shall include information about the method to install it to the tree with emphasis on safety precautions.

5.5.7 The use of a lineman’s/climbing belt shall be presented as a means for stabilizing the user during ascent and the installation of a hang-on treestand.

5.5.8 Video instructions for harnesses that are separately furnished (after market) must fully address the topics in 5.3.1 – 5.3.6 above that involve, are related to, or mention harness use but are not required to cover the details of installing or using specific treestand models, that is, climbers, hang-ons, ladders, or tripods. However, the proper use of the harness with each specific treestand model must be shown and explained.

5.6 *Additional Content:*

5.6.1 It is recommended that additional instructions be given as follows:

5.6.1.1 Information on the method of securing applicable attachments.

5.6.1.2 Information (not given above) about applicable user adjustments.

5.6.1.3 Aids or helpful hints that are not obvious to the inexperienced user.

5.7 *Placement*—Instructions shall be included with each unit. It is recommended that (where applicable) the instructions be attached to the unit or placed within a part of the unit.

6. **Keywords**

6.1 backbar; climbing stick; platform; suspension relief device; treestand; tripod

APPENDIX**(Nonmandatory Information)****X1. Additional Information**

X1.1 This practice is provided for use by manufacturers of treestands and testing companies. Criteria has been developed for certification of treestands and this practice is an integral part of the certification. However, a treestand conforming to

this practice alone does not constitute certification and those manufacturers desiring certification must meet all applicable standards as a minimum requirement.

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