

Welcome to the first issue of Tree Work News in 2010, this is the fourth edition of HSE's e-newsletter for the arboriculture and forestry industries.

Reducing the risks from top - handled chainsaw use and the dangers of "kickback"

A review of accidents reported to HSE has highlighted the number of times top-handled chainsaws, and in particular "kick back", are mentioned as the cause of the injury. Many of these injuries have been extremely serious and some, sadly, fatal. Reflecting upon a 27 year career in the tree care industry, Jeremy Lawton, a City & Guilds NPTC assessor and Lantra registered instructor, has written to highlight the key factors to consider in the safe use of top-handled chainsaws. These include:

- saw selection and maintenance;
- planning and preparation;
- operational issues;
- supervision for the less experienced and trainees; and
- aerial rescue provisions.

The full text of Jeremy's article may be found at:
www.hse.gov.uk/treework/articles/chainsaw-risk.

Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs)

HSE's programme of SHADs for forestry and arboriculture is continuing into 2010/11. They have been very popular and attendees have found them to be both beneficial and enjoyable.

Arb SHADs

The 'Engaging Arboricultural Contractors' events are aimed at the clients who employ arborists. They explain and reinforce the need to ensure that competent contractors are employed and provide a simple framework to help clients meet their legal duties. The next events in 2010 are on:

- 27 April at Acton Scott, Church Stretton, Shropshire; and
- 28 April at Haigh Hall, Wigan.

Attendance is by invitation only so we can arrange suitable facilities and refreshments. If you would like to attend one of these events, for further information, email Glenda Benger at glenda.benger@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

Forestry SHADs

These have been developed in partnership with the industry and are being delivered by trainers who have years of experience working in forestry. They are run by HSE and the Forestry Commission's Learning and Development (previously Forest Training Services), and are intended for those involved in managing forestry operations, including forestry work managers, site safety coordinators, contractors, operators and land-owners.

Demonstrations reflect the type of forestry work taking place in the area and are based on situations that have led to serious and even fatal accidents. Currently they focus on use of forwarders and chainsaws, including take-down of hung up trees. They will also



cover other significant hazards, including hand-arm and whole-body vibration, noise, public access, and working with contractors.

The next event is to be held on 24 March at Huntly, Aberdeenshire.

These events are also by invitation only. These have been issued already via the trade associations but places are still available. For further information, email Simon Parry at simon.parry@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

AFAG Update

Report on latest meeting – December 2009

AFAG held its 17th meeting at the Forestry Commission HQ, Edinburgh, on 1 December 2009. Graeme Walker, Head of the HSE's Agriculture and Food Sector, chaired the meeting, which included a detailed discussion on the significant developments in training and certification.

New members

Simon Wallace was welcomed to AFAG, representing the Forestry Commission's Learning & Development. He replaces Jim Dewar who has moved on to a new job in the FC after many years as a leading light on AFAG. His expertise and wise counsel will be greatly missed. We wish him well in his new post.

AFAG Project updates

Key areas/developments include:

Reduce accidents involving chain saws

The first Project Group meeting was held in July 2009, in which the key cause of injuries in forestry (being hit by falling trees) and in arboriculture (cut by chainsaws) was discussed. The Group agreed that ensuring competent workers is essential, which relates back not just to training and certification, but maintenance of skill levels through appropriate refresher/update training. Although refresher/update training is recommended, this is not being taken up properly. This situation needs to be reviewed.

AFAG also needs to show that its work is driving down accident rates, but currently there is no baseline to work to. A small working group is to be formed to look at how the industry may be able to record the necessary information and to develop performance indicators for comparisons between companies.

Key learning points, in particular the root causes identified from accident investigations are to be posted on HSE's tree work website.

Improving management of work at height, including implementation of the Work at Height Regulations

The Arboriculture Association's Guide to Good Climbing Practice is to be revised and this will be linked to a new Guide to Good Rigging Practice. A Working Group is to be convened shortly.

Rigging and dismantling techniques in arboriculture

HSE is funding a series of 4 articles to highlight key findings from the research. These should be available via HSE's Treework website by the end of March and will be published in selected trade journals.

HSE is also funding a practical workshop at Beddgelert, North Wales in June 2010. This is for key industry partners to develop and promote the new techniques and precautions identified by the research.

Machine-assisted takedown of trees

AFAG leaflets 310, *Use of Winches in Directional Felling and Takedown*, and 603, *Mechanical Harvesting*, are being revised to incorporate the recommendations from recent research. These are awaiting final edit and it is hoped they will be published by summer 2010.

It is hoped that working demonstrations of techniques for take-down of edge trees will be presented by the researcher and the National School of Forestry in a new 'Safety Arena' at this year's APF Show, using 'helmet-cams' to show operations on a nearby TV screen.

Chainsaw PPE – To improve and promote standards and related issues

Concerns have been raised with HSE over increasing chainsaw speed and the level of protection provided by current chainsaw PPE. This is being taken forward by Hans Fairley and James Brown in conjunction with HSE's representative on BSI's Committee on protective clothing (due to meet in February 2010).

Market surveillance (product design)

A number of issues relating to wood chippers were also raised. Research by HSL identified opportunities to reduce noise at source on these machines. The findings from the research are available from the HSE website at: www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr618.pdf. There has also been some recent enforcement action on guarding standards. HSE's Information Sheet, AIS 38, describing the transitional arrangements agreed in October 2000 on the guarding of Power Fed Mobile Wood Chippers, is to be reviewed and updated.

Promotion of Occupational Health Services

The possibility that this project can be re-started in Scotland is currently being explored. Jason Liggins will be contacting the relevant government bodies, trade associations and other organisations involved in the original project over the next couple of months. If the project can be re-started, it is hoped that an industry survey will be carried out in 2010 to identify sources of occupational health advice and support available to the forestry sector, and the level of awareness of health issues within the industry.

Identifying the prevalence and causes of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and develop strategies for risk reduction

Alex Laver reported on a recent event he attended in the USA. A simple "alert" card has been produced. This and other information such as the Watch your back leaflet and video will be promoted via the Treework website.

UPM Tilhill are using physiotherapy to good effect in reducing time off work. The AA will be asked to include MSDs on the programmes for next year's amenity and utility arb conferences.

Reduce operator exposure to hand-arm vibration, whole body vibration and noise

The research report on WBV has been published. The information that it contains is complicated so summary guidance is being produced for managers and users. The first set of guidance, aimed at operators of mobile forestry machinery, will be published shortly on HSE's tree work website.

Reduce exposure to pesticides, eg during tree planting

The Working Group has met to discuss issues associated with planting pesticide treated trees and AFAG 103 (Planting) is to be revised. An article will be published shortly on HSE's tree work website highlighting controls that should be used when planting pesticide treated saplings, in advance of revised AFAG 103.

Improving Management of H&S and the role of Site Safety Coordinators at Forestry Sites (including Lone Working)

Due to the complexity of this project, lone working has been separated from the work to revise INDG 294 *Managing health and safety in forestry*.

The Working Group reviewing INDG 294 has met a number of times but there are still some issues to be resolved. It has been proposed that the title of 'Site Safety Coordinator' should become 'Forestry Works Supervisor'. It is proposed that this person would be formally appointed by the FWM and act as a conduit for information and supervision when the FWM is not on site. This is still subject to negotiation with the industry bodies, contractors, etc.

Guidance on lone working will be progressed during 2010.

Communications

HSE's new tree work website is now up and running and can be accessed at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/index.htm>. Feed back on the new website has been extremely positive.

If you have any comments or suggestions to improve the web site please contact Jason Liggins at jason.liggins@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

In addition, following positive industry feedback on HSE's pilot guidance video on the safe use of woodchippers (www.hse.gov.uk/treework/resources/videos.htm), discussions are currently underway with Myerscough College to explore the possibility of developing a range of short guidance videos based upon the AFAG suite of guidance leaflets. These videos will be used by Myerscough College as part of their on-line teaching resource and will also be available to the tree work sector for viewing or downloading from the HSE tree work website.

New AFAG Projects

The following new projects have been put forward for inclusion in AFAG's Workplan for 2010/11:

- The use of Alpine Tractors in Forestry;
- Felling Large Trees; and
- Use of cranes in arboriculture.

AFAG Notes and Papers

The minutes and papers from AFAG meetings are available from www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/hsc/iacs/aiac/afag.htm.

What's New – Current Topics

Safe Working Near Overhead Power Lines

Excuse the pun but we are currently working on a revision of AFAG 804 Electricity at work: forestry and arboriculture following the production of the Energy Network Association (ENA) Guidance Note G55/2 Safe working in proximity to overhead power lines. This sets the standards for work and clearances around power lines permitted by the Electricity Suppliers/Distribution companies. The information in G55/2 also supersedes the information in AFAG 404 Electrical utility arboriculture and this has been withdrawn.

ENA have also produced an 'Information Note' which provides a map showing the boundaries of the various electricity suppliers and their emergency telephone numbers. This is available on the ENA website:

<http://2009.energynetworks.org/emergency-contacts/>

Another useful Information Note associated with this provides practical guidance on what to do in an emergency, ie after having contacted a power line:

http://2009.energynetworks.org/storage/emergency-contact-nos_090624.pdf.

You may want to 'save' the relevant number(s) of local suppliers in your mobile phones and display this information in vehicle cabs, etc.

First Aid At Work

From 1 October 2009 new changes to the first aid training regime were introduced to give businesses and organisations greater flexibility. While legislation remains the same, there are changes to the supporting guidance.

So what has changed?

The guidance on first aid in the workplace has changed, but there are no changes to the underlying legislation which governs employers' legal responsibilities. The new guidance is aimed at giving employers more flexibility in determining their first aid needs.

On 1 October 2009, the mandatory four-day First Aid At Work (FAW) training courses were reduced to three days and there is also now an option for a one-day course in Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) for smaller businesses. EFAW training enables a first-aider to give emergency first aid to someone who is injured or becomes ill while at work. FAW training includes EFAW and also equips the first-aider to apply first aid to a range of specific injuries and illness.

These shorter, more streamlined courses are designed to meet the needs of businesses and the standards of health and safety training that the law demands for workplaces. Compared with the four-day course, the three-day version will be simplified with less theory and more emphasis on practical aspects. A few elements in the syllabus of the four-day course will not be included in the three-day course.

Who can deliver the training?

As before, any training organisation delivering FAW courses must be approved by HSE and must follow a training standard set by HSE. As part of this process, HSE will ensure that training organisations are monitored to check compliance with the training standard. These checks will include observation of training delivery. Training organisations delivering EFAW courses must be approved by HSE or a recognised Awarding Body of Ofqual/Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Refresher training

All FAW qualified first-aiders still have to attend a two-day requalification course every three years. HSE strongly recommends annual refresher training for qualified first-aiders. Although not mandatory, it will help them maintain their basic skills and keep up to date with any changes to first aid procedures. Employers who follow this guidance will be best placed to meet their legal responsibilities.

Information for employees

Make sure you inform your employees of the first-aid arrangements you have put in place. Putting up notices telling staff who and where the first-aiders or appointed persons are and where the first-aid box is will usually be enough. You will need to make special arrangements to give first-aid information to employees with reading or language difficulties.

Need More Information?

Further advice is contained in:

The free leaflets INDG214 *First aid at work – your questions answered* <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg214.pdf>, *Basic advice on first aid at work* INDG347(rev1) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg347.pdf and *Latex and you* Leaflet INDG320 HSE Books 2000 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg320.pdf.

Two first aid posters: *Basic advice on first aid at work* HSE Books 2006 ISBN 978 0 7176 6195 4 and *Electric shock: First aid procedures* HSE Books 2006 ISBN 978 0 7176 6203 6.

More detailed practical guidance on complying with your first-aid duties is available in *First aid at work. The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. Approved Code of Practice and guidance* L74 HSE Books 2009 ISBN 978 0 7176 6260 9.

Lists of first-aid training organisations and Awarding Bodies are available from HSE's Infoline, see address below.

Information on first aid at work is also available on the first aid web pages of HSE's website at www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/index.htm.

Toxicodendron Vernicifluum

There has been another case reported to HSE of a tree surgeon coming into contact with the very toxic sap of this tree. The sap causes severe burns to the skin and once a person has been affected the reaction can last several months. Further information on this tree and the precautions that need to be taken to protect anyone working on it can be found in the Alert notice contained in the May 2006 edition of the predecessor to *Tree Work News*, "ArbNews". This is still available via: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/pdf/arboc06.pdf>.

Meet HSE

HSE staff from the Agriculture Sector will be present at the following arb and forestry events this year:

Arboricultural Association Trade Fair, Bathurst Estate, Cirencester 11-12 June 2010
Further information on this event is available from <http://www.trees.org.uk/index.php>.

IOG Saltex, Windsor Racecourse 7-9 September 2010
HSE will be found in the Skills and Learning Zone. Further information on this event is available from <http://www.iogsaltex.co.uk/>

APF, Cannock Chase 23-25 September 2010
We look forward to seeing you at the new "Safety Arena" we are setting up the APF, together with other industry organisations, trainers, suppliers etc. Further information on this event is available from <http://www.apfexhibition.co.uk/>

Please come along and discuss your concerns about any health and safety issue with us at these events.

Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995 Website: www.hsebooks.co.uk (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk.)

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG.

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