



NEWS RELEASE May 2013

**Chainsaw and supervisor refresher training
Forest industry compliance announced as 1st October 2013**

With the full support of its industry members, the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) has announced the introduction of mandatory refresher training with effect from 1st October 2013. The training compliance is targeting all chainsaw operators and site supervisors operating in the forest industry.

Improving chainsaw safety is one of the priority goals of the UK Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA). The initiative, led by a cross-industry working group, includes a new scheme for update and refresher training for chainsaw operators and the supervisors that manage forest operational sites.

Felling trees with chainsaws can be one of the most hazardous activities in forestry, and it is essential that such activities are carried out by highly skilled and competent operators. Certificates of competence were introduced in the early 1990s to improve operator safety, but despite this development the accident rate remains unacceptably high.

For chainsaw operators, the scheme is targeting those certificated operators who have not received any formally recorded chainsaw training for a period longer than five years. Given chainsaw certification was first introduced in the 1990s, there are many in the industry that have received little or no update training for this period of time. This is not best practice and falls short of our legal requirements.

For forest works managers (FWMs) and site supervisors (SS), the training is aimed at refreshing those responsible for site operational management with the most recent thinking on chainsaw use and also to be consistent with the current operator refresher training being delivered.

The scheme is not a re-certification – it is a measure of competency and an opportunity to refresh existing skills and learn new techniques. It is designed to enable the forest industry to comply with guidance from HSE, which recommends that all chainsaw operators have regular (deemed to be at least every five years) refresher training to ensure that they work to industry good practice and maintain their level of competence. The FISA scheme has been endorsed by all of the leading forest industry players, including the Forestry Commission.

After the compliance date of 1st October 2013, contract awards will require chainsaw operators and supervisors to demonstrate that they have undertaken formally recorded chainsaw training within the five-year period immediately prior to the commencement of any operation/contract with participating organisations.

FISA and its membership see this as an important compliance development in ultimately improving the accident and incident rates in the forest industry and look to full support from all those in the forestry sector.

ENDS / NOTES TO EDITORS OVER



NOTES TO EDITORS

1. For more information on compliance and the deadline see: www.ukfisa.com and look under 'Training'.
2. For further information, contact FISA chairman Steve Lavery chairman@ukfisa.com
3. Representatives from the leading industry organisations have joined together to form the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) which sets out the industry commitment agreed by each organisation to raise the standard of Health, safety and welfare in the work place.