

Fencing wire eye injury

A fencing squad were removing redundant stock fencing as part of a larger fencing renewal job. The work area was relatively level and close to the public road.

The fence was an old 7-wire fence, a top barb wire and six 4mm mild steel wires.

All of the wires had been cut at the section strainer posts to release any residual tension. The operator was cutting the mild steel wire into 2m sections so he could bundle them up for removal.



The operator was bending over cutting one of the bottom wires with a set of bolt cutters when one of the sections of wire sprang up and caught him in the right eye.

The wire cut his lower eyelid.

The worksite first aider provided first aid and the injured person was taken to the local Accident and Emergency hospital for a medical examination.

Fortunately, no serious eye

damage had occurred, the injured person was released and was able to return to work 48hrs later, once the wound had sufficiently healed.

The forest industry safety guide. Fencing 104, makes the following statement

- Eye protection (safety glasses to EN 166) is strongly advised because of the danger from flying debris, particularly when dismantling old fences.



FISA Safety Guide 104

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Created by, Scottish Woodlands Compliance Support Team



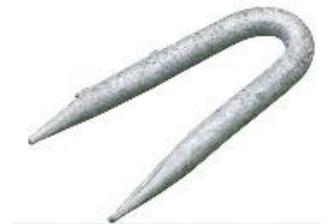
The fencing squad were aware of the hazard, the site risk assessment had identified the requirement of eye protection and the squad had protective goggles with them on site, however they had chosen not to wear these at this time as they were finding that they were steaming up.

We are aware of a number of similar fencing eye injuries which have occurred under very similar circumstances, to fencers working in both the forestry and agricultural sector. **A significant number of these have resulted in permanent loss of sight.**

Due to the **lifechanging** extent of these appalling injury types and to the fact that simple basic protective equipment is readily available which can eliminate these, the use of which is recognised and 'strongly recommended' by the forest industry's safety guide, - **Scottish Woodlands will no longer accept** fencing contractors working without eye protection on **Scottish Woodlands managed worksites**, when undertaking the following fencing tasks, under any working conditions

- cutting or straining any wire, new or old
- hammering in fencing staples

Staples are also known to have caused major eye injuries. If one point of the staple does not catch in the timber, the staple can 'fold' under the hammer strike, recoil like a compressed spring and fire off at high speed. In most instances the staple will miss the operator or harmlessly strike him, if however, it strikes the eye, particularly with one of the sharpened points, it may cause a major eye injury, including permanent loss of sight.



Eye Protection

When you are selecting safety glasses/goggles for your protection ensure you purchase those marked as EN166. Consider using glasses with anti-scratch (marked as K) and anti-fogging (marked as N) coatings, these greatly reduce the loss of clarity through abrasion and misting up. Better quality glasses/goggles allow better clarity and last longer.



If safety glasses or goggles are your chosen method of eye protection and your work type or working conditions are resulting in them misting up, then revert to either a mesh face shield or mesh safety glasses. These must be to EN1731.



A full mesh face shield, fitted to a hard hat or a more light weight flip-up band would be appropriate eye protection for all working conditions and has the additional advantage of offering full face protection.



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