

Safety and Assurance Bulletin



INSIST ON SAFETY

January 2019



WELCOME BACK!

Happy New Year and welcome to 2019. I hope everyone had a well-deserved and restful break.

■ I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who works for or on behalf of Tilhill Forestry for all their hard work during 2018.

We should all use the start of this New Year as an opportunity to refocus our minds to ensure that each of us not only works safely ourselves but that we also insist that others work safely too.

Tilhill's review of 2018 shows no reduction in accidents on our work sites; in the last 12 months we had 5 incidents that were severe enough to be reported to the HSE as RIDDORs, these resulted in significant injuries to our contractors. As you would expect, we have looked hard into the causes and put in place improvements to minimise the likelihood of these accidents being repeated.

While there was a pleasing trend in that, unlike the previous 12 months, only one of these was to a chainsaw operator, his injuries were extensive nevertheless as was reported in last month's Safety & Assurance Bulletin.

The potential for injury to chainsaw operators being struck by the tree that they are felling remains the area of highest concern for me and I am working closely with FISA to drive improvement.

The Tilhill Forestry Safety & Assurance team are continuously looking into ways to minimise accidents and to reduce the severity of injury. Near miss reports are therefore a vital contributor to the success of this aim. They help us identify trends in incident types and enable investigations into the more significant near miss events where the outcomes could have been much more serious. **Most importantly, they allow us to put improvements in place to minimise the likelihood of incidents BEFORE anyone is injured. This is why it is so important to report your near miss events to us.**

During 2018 Tilhill hosted five well attended Insist on Safety events covering topics ranging from welfare, public awareness, lone working, Lyme disease, oil spill response and pesticide refreshers. These events generated very useful discussions and have resulted in some positive improvements such as the development of new hazard warning signage for our sites.

These events will undergo a change this year as we have encouraged other businesses to combine resources. FISA will therefore be holding a series of Safety Health Awareness Days (SHADs) five of which will be sponsored by Tilhill Forestry. This collaboration means that there will be a greater number of events in more parts of the country in order to make it easier for everyone in the industry to attend.

The HSE's Forestry Campaign took off last year with around 50 sites being visited by their inspectors. Some interesting conversations took place and observations made. It was useful to have independent eyes looking at our work and we have taken away some useful recommendations and ideas to improve safety and welfare.

On your return to work after this Christmas break, indeed after any break, it is vital that you reassess your work environment and refresh your knowledge of the safety procedures that apply to you and your colleagues. Check if anything has changed during your break. At this time of year there may well be an increased risk of slips, trips and falls due to adverse weather or even risk of machine overturn due to slippery slopes. The risk of diffuse pollution is also increased at this time of year as we experience higher rainfall and snow melt.

On behalf of the Tilhill Forestry Board, I rely on each and every one of you to **INSIST ON SAFETY** and wish you all a safe and prosperous New Year.

George McRobbie
Managing Director



CONTENTS

Stop, Think & Plan	2
Winter Driving	3

Stop, Think & Plan

A near miss was reported recently where an excavator got bogged on site to the extent that it took two other excavators half a day to recover the machine.

■ This has highlighted the environmental and health and safety hazards associated with debogging machinery.

Machinery getting bogged is, by its very nature, unplanned. Human nature often drives the temptation to try and recover the machine as quickly as possible to avoid delaying works.

Whenever machinery is travelling over unpaved ground, particularly during the winter months, there will be some risk of it getting bogged. It's important to consider the risk of this happening at planning stage and include it within a pre-commencement meeting, hazards and constraints map and risk assessments. Refer to [FISA Safety Guide 703](#) and use it as part of the site induction or pre-commencement meeting.

Your assessment will need to include:

- Ground conditions.
- Machine conditions.
- Machine capability.

- What equipment you would need on site if a machine became bogged.



Above: Machinery shown in the image is for illustrative purposes only.

- Manual handling of debogging equipment.
- The risk of diffuse pollution during/after recovery.
- What materials/equipment are needed to manage the risk of diffuse pollution – is that available before recovery operations start?

Plan travelling routes and avoid, or thatch, any wet or rutted areas. If in doubt, use an alternative route if you can and be prepared to stop work if the site becomes too wet.

All operators must receive training in how to operate the equipment and to do the tasks required.

If a machine becomes bogged, the operator should:

- Stop all drive to tracks and/or wheels.
- Make the machine safe.
- Dismount the machine safely (eg climb off it on the high side when on a slope, if practicable).
- Assess the situation.
- Advise the 'site safety co-ordinator' and arrange for any assistance that is required.
- Consider anything that may help with recovery (eg partial or full unloading).
- Consider emergency drainage, if safe to do so, where the engine or its components may be damaged by ponded water.

Remember:

- **STOP** – stop and assess the situation. Do not try to remove bogged machinery without first considering the risks.
- **THINK** – think and discuss a plan with others on site.
- **PLAN** – plans should be made at pre commencement and areas of bogging risk identified before the work starts. If a machine does become bogged you must carefully plan its removal.

Winter Driving

A new year has begun and the mornings are misty and the evenings are still dark.

■ Winter is upon us so it is time for our seasonal reminder of the different driving challenges that cold and wet weather can bring.

As a starting point, when driving in bad winter weather conditions ask, yourself whether your journey is really necessary and if so have you left additional time to allow for bad weather? Is your vehicle 'winter ready' and are you equipped to cope with any unplanned incidents such as getting stuck in snow, sliding off the road etc.?

Many minor roads and of course forest roads are untreated and often in shade so conditions can change on the same road over a short distance.

It is not just ice or snow that cause hazards when driving in winter. There are a range of hazards including fog, winter sun and your vehicle condition.

Tips for safer winter driving:

- **Prepare your vehicle**
 - Ensure your lights are clean and working, you have screen wash and good wipers, tyres are in good condition and your brakes are working well.
- **Have an emergency kit**
 - Tow rope, shovel, wellington boots, hazard warning triangle, hi-viz and warm clothing, first aid kit, de-icing kit, torch, blanket etc.
- **Prepare for your journey**
 - Check local weather and traffic conditions before setting off.
 - If emergency services recommend that people don't travel then try to avoid making your journey.
 - Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.

TILHILL FORESTRY Toolbox Talk



Winter Driving

Winter – respect the elements

The British winter is unpredictable. Bad weather can strike suddenly so the best advice when severe weather hits is to stay off the road. If you must drive, make sure you are prepared for the conditions.

Plan your journey

During severe wintry weather conditions

- Ask yourself – is your journey absolutely essential?
- Check the local and national weather forecasts.
- Listen to local and national radio for travel information.
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.
- Make sure you are equipped with warm clothes, hi-vis, food, boots and a torch. In snowy conditions, take a spade.
- Clear your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a screen scraper and de-icer.

If you get into trouble

- Do not use a mobile phone while driving. Stop somewhere safe or ask a passenger to make the call.
- On a motorway, it is best to use a roadside emergency telephone, because the breakdown/emergency services will be able to locate you easily. If you have to use a mobile phone, make sure you know your location from the numbers on the marker posts on the side of the hard shoulder.
- Abandoned vehicles can hold up rescue vehicles and snowploughs. To ensure that the road is cleared as quickly as possible, stay with your vehicle until help arrives.
- If you have to leave your vehicle to get help, make sure other drivers can see you.

Vehicle condition

- In winter it is even more important to check your vehicle is well maintained and serviced.
- Keep the lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from ice and snow.
 - Keep your battery fully charged.
 - Add anti-freeze to the radiator and winter additive to the windscreen washer bottles.
 - Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order.
 - Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth and are maintained at the correct pressure.

Adjust your driving to the conditions

- Hail, heavy snow and rain reduce visibility.
- Use dipped headlights and reduce your speed.

When roads are icy or slushy

- It can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road. Drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop.
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin.
- Manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration.
- To brake on ice or snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use the brake pedal gently.



- If you start to skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.

Watch out for fog

- Watch out for fog – it drifts rapidly and is often patchy.
- In foggy conditions, drive very slowly using dipped headlights.
- Use fog-lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves.
- Don't hang on to the tail-lights of the vehicle in front. This gives you a false sense of security and means you may be driving too close.
- Don't speed up suddenly, even if it seems to be clearing. You can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog.

Winter sun

- Dazzle from winter sun can be dangerous. Keep a pair of sunglasses handy.

Rain

- In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road. In wet weather:
- You should keep well back from the vehicle in front. This will increase your ability to see and plan ahead.
 - If steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means the water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually.
 - The rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen.

Flooded roads

- Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep.
- Drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch – this will stop you from stalling.
- Avoid the deepest water, usually near the kerb.
- Remember – test your brakes when you are through the flood before you drive at normal speed.

TT/47 Version 2 – February 2016

1 of 1

- Make sure your fuel tank is full and your mobile phone is fully charged.

- **Prepare yourself**
 - If you feel ill due to a cold or other winter illness it may not be advisable to drive.
 - If you have not driven in the conditions before take some time to consider this before you set off.

Guidance can be found in our Toolbox Talk [TT/47](#) and the RoSPA website

(www.rospa.com) has useful resources, including a winter driving tips factsheet.

Remember:

- Assess your journey before you leave – during adverse weather only make journeys that are absolutely necessary.
- Ensure you and your vehicle are winter ready.
- Follow the tips in the Toolbox Talk and on the RoSPA website.



January 2019 – Safety & Assurance Bulletin briefing

I have been personally briefed in the contents of this Safety & Assurance Bulletin.

Please add any questions relating to this briefing or any other health, safety and environmental matters you wish to raise:

Please add any suggestions on health, safety and environmental matters:

I have been briefed by: _____ My District is: _____

I understand that I am encouraged to submit comment and contribution from this bulletin.

Signed: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

ORIGINAL sheet to be held at District.

Send a **COPY** to: Head of Safety, Tilhill Forestry, Kings Park House, Laurelhill, Stirling, FK7 9NS.
Fax: 01786 435001. Email: ios@tilhill.com

Contractors: If you would like your own copy of this Safety & Assurance Bulletin please contact your local office and ask to be included on the mailing list.