



Hung-Up Tree Safety

Hung-up trees have been a significant cause of fatalities over many years in forestry and timber harvesting. It is inevitable that trees will become hung-up from time to time but they must be dealt with safely.

■ The evidence base is very clear, a chainsaw operator dislodging a hung-up tree is by far the most likely party to be injured or indeed killed by that tree.

As with all risks, the management of the risk is best done at the planning stage of works. Where motor-manual felling is required, plan the work to minimise the risk of getting trees hung-up. This may include felling patterns and operator selection of trees to reduce the chance of getting a tree hung-up.

Should a tree become hung up a plan should be agreed and be readily available. Suitable takedown aids must be available on site and the hung-up tree dislodged as soon as practicable. In the past, there has been an expectation that chainsaw operators will use hand winches to pull down hung-up trees and not enough consideration given to other means to deal with the situation. Winches are heavy and will

often be left some distance away from the site, as a result, many operators have been tempted to take short cuts. Also, the risks associated with carrying a heavy winch across, what may be difficult terrain, must be considered.

Machine takedown is generally the safest method for dealing with a hung-up tree. However, if the tree cannot be taken down safely by an approved method then an exclusion zone must be established and taped off until it can be dealt with safely. Ensure the tree is reported to the Site Safety Co-ordinator (SSC) and Forest Works Manager (FWM) as soon as possible, prior to leaving site. The operator must move to an alternative felling area until takedown can be completed with the necessary mechanical assistance.

This agreement and method must be recorded in writing and signed off at the Pre-Commencement Meeting. To help with this we have reviewed our guidance for managers and our hung-up tree plan and also created a Toolbox Talk. A copy of the plan, together with a copy of the Toolbox Talk for Hung-Up Trees must be issued to the chainsaw operator and discussed when they arrive on site.



Remember:

When preparing the hung-up tree plan you must consider:

- The site – location, level of 3rd party access and the proximity to the worksite.
- The people – do you have the right competency for the work?
- The tree – size, location and position.
- The equipment – machinery, portable winches, turning bar/strop, radio, phone, tape and additional signs.

Refer to FISA guide 302 Basic Chainsaw Felling and Manual Takedown for more guidance and Hung-Up Trees Toolbox Talk [TT/86](#).

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Machinery Checks Going Tech

We use machinery every day on almost all our sites so our exposure to problems occurring from machinery failures is high. This means we have to work hard to ensure all machinery and equipment is always fit for purpose.

■ Inspection and maintenance of machinery is a key part of its ongoing suitability and safety. The forest is a harsh environment for machinery to operate in. It is constantly exposed to the weather and physical damage and this can cause deterioration in the machine's state of repair, potentially compromising its safety.

All machines must be maintained properly so they remain fit for purpose and records should be kept of this maintenance. For a number of years Tilhill Forestry has provided a range of maintenance log books for the commonly used machines for contractors to use if they don't have their own system of record keeping.

Tilhill Forestry is now working with a company to provide contractors with a number of App based inspection checklists – tailored to common forest machinery – which will allow you to easily record routine inspections and maintenance checks using your mobile phone. The app provides several significant benefits for machine operators:

- Low cost subscription rate per machine rather than per user.
- Checklists can be easily tailored to the machine – harvester/excavator/forwarder/tractor/post knocker etc.
- The checklists can be completed while the phone is out of signal – on any model of smartphone.
- Design is focused on the operator – ensuring it's a very straightforward process.
- Any text required to record a problem (e.g. cracked windscreen or missing bolts etc.) can be typed like a text message or spoken to the phone which converts to text automatically.
- If you highlight an issue during the inspection you have the option to take a photo and the picture is held within the inspection record.
- Once complete, the checklist record is held in a secure but easily accessible database and readily shared as required.
- Any maintenance issues identified in the checklist which are then repaired can be easily recorded within the app, creating a permanent record of works completed.

Tilhill Forestry is developing inspection checklists which we will then trial with a number of contractors. Once we have a number of checklists successfully trialled we will contact relevant contractors with details of how you can trial it yourself and then subscribe.

If you'd like to be part in the initial trial, please contact Head of Safety & Assurance, Kirsty Adams: kirsty.adams@tilhill.com

Remember:

PUWER requires:

- Machinery to be suitable for the task it is undertaking.
- Machinery to be maintained in a safe working condition.
- Machinery to be regularly inspected to check for defects.
- Operators to be trained and competent.
- Dangerous parts to be suitably guarded (e.g. Power Take-Off (PTO) on a tractor).
- Suitable control systems, including emergency stops that are clearly labelled.
- Mobile work equipment to have Operator Protection systems (OPS, FOPs and ROPs) suitable for the risks.



Caution: Mud on Road

The recent inclement weather has served as a reminder that there is a greater risk of causing a hazard on the roads by way of depositing mud.

■ An additional concern is the lack of biosecurity relating to plant health by trailing mud away from the worksite (see FISA website for further information www.ukfisa.com and search for Biosecurity Bulletin – Mud on Road).

Vehicle operators and contractors who deposit mud on the road are potentially liable for a range of offences. As well as possibly committing a criminal offence, you also run the risk that you may be liable to be sued for causing a nuisance and/or negligence for the subsequent damages caused.

- The Highways Act 1980 states: “If a person, without lawful authority or excuse, deposits anything whatsoever on a highway in consequence of which a user of the highway is injured or endangered, that person is guilty of an offence.”
- The Road Traffic Act 1988 covers situations where a vehicle is driven dangerously on a road. Driving dangerously can include driving a vehicle in a state that could cause danger to others.
- Punishment for these offences ranges from fines to imprisonment.
- If you deposit mud on the road then a local authority has the power under the Highways Act to give notice to require you to remove it.

- If you fail to comply with the notice the authority may then make a complaint to a Magistrates’ Court for a removal and disposal order. The local authority can also remove the deposit itself and charge you the removal costs.



Remember:

- When exiting a site, keep to low speeds – especially when coming out onto county roads.
- Do everything possible to prevent mud being deposited on the road. This includes cleaning mud from vehicles, as far as practical, before they are taken onto the road.
- Report incidents of mud on the road to the Forest Works Manager (FWM).

Trailer Talk

Trailers are an important tool for forestry management companies and contractors.

■ Used for carrying a range of equipment across a variety of terrain it is vital that they are maintained and subject to regular checks.

In July 2017, the National Trailer and Towing Association (NTTA), rolled out the Free Safety Checks initiative via their QS Members (those with the tools, expertise, training and systems of work in place).

These checks involve a 10-15-minute visual inspection of the trailer producing a written report advising on the general condition of the trailer. A well looked after trailer is very likely to be given a clean bill of health needing no work. At worst, it could need some remedial action. Either way, both scenarios result in every trailer

inspected leaving the centre in a safe, road-legal condition, fit for purpose.

So far, of all trailers that have been examined, shocking failure rates of 89% have been seen.

www.ntta.co.uk/freesafetycheck

Under current legislation there is no requirement for ‘light trailers’ under 3500kg to be registered and to have mandatory annual roadworthiness checks/inspection (MOTs). However, the Government had commissioned research into road accidents involving trailers over 750kg and is scheduled to publish a report and assessment in July this year as to whether MOT and registration regulations should be made.

Tilhill Forestry has revised the Toolbox Talk on Trailers which is available to all: [TT/46 Towing Trailers](#).

TILHILL FORESTRY Toolbox Talk



Towing Trailers

Driving Licence

Only drivers with full driving licences are allowed to tow trailers.

Driving licences issued before 01.01.97. If you passed your car driving test (category B) before 01.01.97, you will usually be entitled to drive a motor vehicle and trailer with a combined MAM* of up to 8250kg.

Driving licences issued on or after 01.01.97. From 01.01.97 drivers who pass their car driving test (category B) can:

• Drive vehicles up to 3500kg maximum authorised mass (MAM) with up to 8 passengers seats with a trailer up to 750kg MAM*.

• Tow heavier trailers if the total MAM* of the drawing vehicle and trailer doesn't exceed 3500kg.

If you want to tow a trailer outside these provisions you'll need to take another test – usually for category BE.

Manufacturers Plate

Braked trailers up to 3500kg MAM do not by law have to be fitted with a manufacturer's plate, however most manufacturers fit them.

Unbraked trailers must be clearly marked with: their unladen weight, maximum gross weight and year of manufacture, though not necessarily on the plate.

Speed Limits

When towing a trailer you are restricted to 60mph on motorways and dual carriageways and 50mph on other roads, unless lower limits are in operation. Vehicle/trailer combinations over 7500kg combined MAM are further restricted to 50mph on dual carriageways.

Other Driving Restrictions

Trailers must not be towed on the outside lane of a three (or more) lane motorway unless unavoidable owing to roadworks, accident or obstructions etc.

Rear view mirrors must be adequate to allow the driver to view the road behind the trailer on both sides. This may necessitate the fitting of supplementary mirrors.

Towing With Cars And Commercial Vehicles Under 1525kg Unladen Weight

Exceeding the maximum towing weight or train weight set by the vehicle or trailer manufacturer can lead to prosecution.

Most vehicles are marked either with the maximum towing weight or the maximum train weight, together with axle weights on the manufacturer's plate. Otherwise the information will be found in the vehicle or trailer handbook.

WARNING!

SAFETY & SECURITY
CLEANING EQUIPMENT
PDI
WARNING!

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Number Plate

An approved style rear number plate must be fitted. It must carry the registration number of the towing vehicle and must be illuminated at night.

continued

Watch Out Beavers About

In Scotland there is a large and expanding population of beavers in the Tay catchment since an unlicensed release in 2001. Sixteen beavers were then reintroduced into Knapdale under licence as part of a five year trial in 2009.

■ Following a review of findings from this trial by Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Government made an announcement in 2016 that beavers were to remain in Scotland and be allowed to expand their range naturally and are therefore a protected species. This is the first time that a mammal has been formally reintroduced into the UK.

Beavers were part of our wildlife for thousands of years before being hunted to extinction in the UK in 1789.

Beavers are ‘ecosystem engineers’, with the dams they build benefitting biodiversity by creating new habitats, increasing habitat diversity and slowing flows, which can help the development of natural flood defences.

However, their dams can impact on forestry by creating localised flooding, potentially resulting in the death of trees or affecting tracks, culverts and access. There may also be deer management impacts as the increased resprouting of beaver-felled trees can attract heavy deer browsing.

Scottish Natural Heritage has set up a beaver mitigation scheme to provide free expert advice to help manage their impacts where they cause problems for land managers. We will also be providing our Managers with advice in a Guidance Note coming soon.

In February this year the Scottish Government announced that the beaver will receive legal protection as a protected species in May 2019.

Beavers live on watercourses and lochs, where the bankside has broadleaf woodland and scrub. They like shallow gradient streams, less than 6 metres wide. They build dams which can be from 0.2 to 3 metres in height and 0.3 to 100 metres in length.

The protection given to them makes it an offence to:

- Kill, injure or capture a beaver.
- Harass a beaver.
- Disturb a beaver when they are occupying a dam, lodge or burrow at any time of year.
- Destroy, damage or obstruct access to a dam, lodge or burrow at any time of the year (these places are protected even when the animal is not present). Note that dams are only protected when they are more than two weeks old.



DO

- ✓ If you think you have beavers on site or see chiselled stumps close to what could be a potential dam or lodge structure on the site, **STOP** work and inform the harvesting or forestry manager.

DON'T

- ✗ Damage or destroy any dams or lodges.
- ✗ Continue with operations until appropriate advice is provided.

Our Ecology team has produced a Toolbox Talk for briefing on site where Beavers may be found: [TT/87 Beavers](#)





April 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.