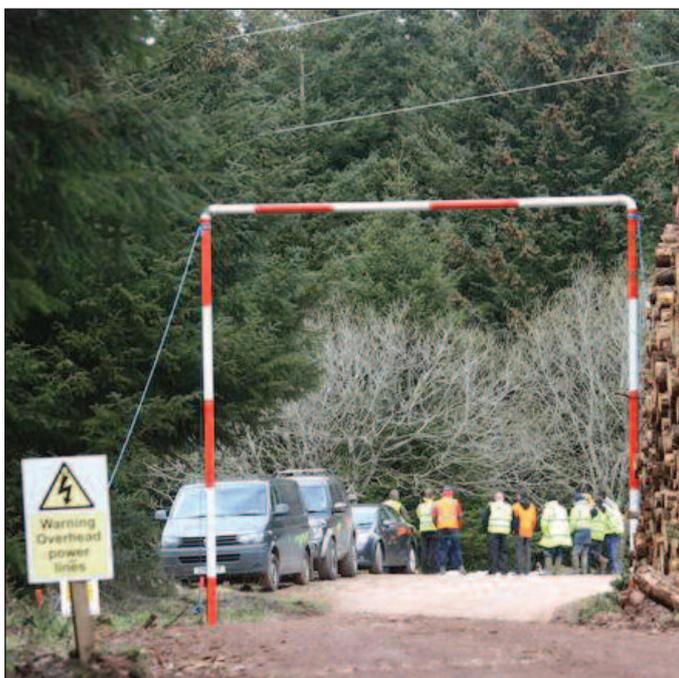




Daily Checks Pay Dividends

A significant near miss was averted on a harvesting operation earlier this month. It has underlined the importance that both managers and operators should remain vigilant in considering all the potential significant hazards and constraints both within and outwith the worksite and forest property.

■ A harvester operator’s vigilance prevented a significant near miss when he spotted an overhead powerline outside the forest boundary. The red zone, which crossed the marked boundary of the felling coupe, had not been taken into account.



A daily pre-start walk through the work area will ensure a final ground check of any health, safety or environmental hazards and constraints in, or adjacent to, the work site, which could be missed once work is underway. In this instance no trees were felled within the red zone of the overhead powerline and the site will be harvested during a planned shutdown at a later date.

When reviewing the hazards and constraints map, together with the risk assessments and holding pre-commencement meetings, it is important to consider not only the immediate hazard and constraints within the worksite, but also looking around the site and outside the forest to consider aspects such as services beyond the forest boundary.

Forests are large, dynamic work environments with a multitude of health, safety and environmental hazards and constraints which evolve over time. A regular review and update of hazards and constraints maps, site risk assessments combined with a final ground check on a daily basis will ensure they’re effectively controlled.

Remember:

- Think about how the site might change as works commence:
- A walk through at the start of each day ensures safety controls are checked and confirmed as suitable and sufficient.
 - Previously undiscovered hazards and constraints can be revealed or hazards can change as work progresses, for example:
 - hidden environmental sensitivities, such as unknown archaeological features.
 - Changing weather and ground conditions may affect planned work.
 - As the site progresses have all neighbouring properties been contacted? Consider if and how the works will impact them.

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Your Vigilance is Required – Nesting Birds

Work over the next few months MUST BE PLANNED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF NESTING BIRDS and avoid delays, rescheduling and unwanted public attention.

■ The breeding season for birds starts early in February becoming busier in March and running on into late summer.

Nesting birds found on site once work starts results in delays, having to stop work or establish additional buffer zones.

The majority of reports we receive tend to be in early May and many involve brushcutting and strimming operations with birds found nesting in gorse, ivy and bushes on site.



On all our worksites we must avoid impacting on nesting birds and must comply with the regulations protecting them.

All wild birds are protected by law throughout the UK when they are nesting. **It is illegal to kill or injure any wild birds or damage or destroy the nest or eggs.** Certain birds are especially protected making it illegal to disturb these species while they are nesting, examples of these on our forestry sites are raptors such as Goshawk, Red Kite, Osprey and the White-tailed Eagle.

While some species of birds may be regarded as pests or vermin we can't kill or destroy these bird's nests or eggs unless we have a Licence to do this. Anyone being granted a licence must also be able to clearly demonstrate that they are doing it

for certain specific reasons including preventing the spread of disease and preserving public health or public safety.

More than 400 species of birds are regularly recorded in the UK, these include both resident breeding species and migrants. Species show different preferences for nesting but, as we found last year, most birds are more likely to nest in scrub or hedgerow.

Remember:

- Every thick hedge, area of scrub vegetation or mature tree is a potential nest site.
- Any work carried out must not damage the nests of breeding birds or be in the vicinity of the nests of those specially protected species.
- To be alert to nesting activities. If nesting birds are found on site, all works in that area will have to stop until the birds have completed breeding.

What to look for before work starts:

- Breeding activity on site, courtship activities or nest building.
- Potential nest sites.
- Nestling/fledgling feeding activity.

There are a number of Toolbox Talks available on breeding birds and raptors.

Over the coming weeks please make good use of these at pre-start meetings and work instruction briefings.

- Breeding Birds (TT/37)
- Nest Identification – is it a common buzzard (TT/79)
- White-tailed Eagle (TT/72)

Toolbox talks are available to our approved contractors by accessing our Contractor Portal here:

www.tilhill.com/contractors

Please request access and a login will be sent by return.

Managers should also be familiar with our Guidance Notes:

- Birds and our operations (GN/19)
- Finding and Protecting Raptor Nests in Woodlands (GN/73)

DO

- ✓ Check for signs of nesting birds.
- ✓ If you think you have found a nest on site, **STOP immediately** and inform your line manager.



DON'T

- ✗ Proceed with any works that might harm breeding birds.

Plastic Waste and Forestry

Current media attention is high on the use of plastics within forestry and woodland management.

■ Within Tilhill we have been proactive in looking for ways to recycle tree bags and trialling alternatives to plastic tree tubes.

When we look at how we manage these products from sourcing to disposal we must consider the waste hierarchy:

A small percentage of the total trees we plant each year are planted with the plastic tree tubes. These may be required because fencing, to protect from deer or rabbits for example, is not a viable option.

The original polypropylene tube (a by-product of the petroleum industry) has many benefits to establishing young broadleaved transplants. However, in terms of prevention of plastic waste resulting from our work, we have been looking for viable alternatives in order to support both our own sustainability projects and those clients who wish to go plastic free and move to a product manufactured from a sustainable resource.

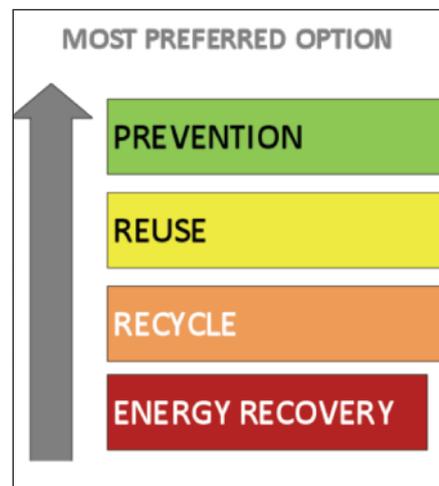
We have been undertaking trials of the alternatives on offer including cardboard tubes and compostable spirals with a variety of results.

Where we manage forests and woodlands longer term we will remove all tubes when they have completed their usefulness in terms of establishment and tree protection.

Reusing old tubes and the tree bags that young transplant trees are delivered in can be a challenge in terms of logistics and the biosecurity issues such items raise.

Historically, we have always gathered plastic from tree bags back to our premises and recycled them through companies such as Solway Recycling who turn this plastic into Hen Houses, picnic tables and chairs as well as other products.

We must make sure that when we recycle, the negative environmental impact is not increased by transporting plastic bags and tubes longer distances for recycling, therefore increasing carbon emissions. Where plastic has been used, sometimes the most environmentally friendly option is to send these bags for energy recovery locally.



We have a number of initiatives on the go at the moment including working with Tubex to recycle all current redundant tubes at local depots.



As the planting season moves up a gear during this month, to help support these initiatives, please follow these guidelines:

Tree Bags:

- Empty bags of any debris, soil, stones, water etc.
- Make sure any waste on site is secure, weighted down to avoid blowing away and removed from site at the end of the job.
- Keep plastic separated from other waste so we are able to send it for 'plastic only' recycling.
- Don't leave bags in storage in such a way that they will fill up with rainwater before removal and disposal.
- Always check with the Tilhill Manager to see where best to drop the bags off en route when work completes.

Tree Shelters: For tree shelters which may be collected over coming months, please remove stakes and nest these together. When maintenance work starts later in the year we need to compact these for transporting for recycling.

PPE – The Last Line of Defence – Correction

In our article 'A focus on hats' we mentioned that '30 to 50 per cent of body heat is lost through the head'.

We need to correct this statement:

In reality, the relative amount of heat you lose from your head will vary, depending on a few factors: the clothing you wear, your physical activity level, and the various bodily functions that govern temperature regulation. However, it is true that there may be some situations in which one might lose a tremendous amount of relative body heat through the head, such as when it's the only uncovered part of the body. But in general, the head isn't a significant area of heat loss – at least not disproportionately more so than any other part of the body.



March 2020 – 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 Tilhill Office is: _____

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

Signed: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

ORIGINAL sheet to be held at the Tilhill Office.

Send a **COPY** to: Head of Safety, Tilhill, Unit 1, Birchden Farm, Broadwater Forest Lane, Groombridge, Kent TN3 9NR. Fax: 01892 860441. 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.