



## About to start work? Read this first:

Recently, we've had reports of contractors starting work with no final instruction or clear go ahead from a Tilhill Manager. This has included road construction, pesticide spraying as well as unauthorised and unlicensed felling.



■ Confirmation from a Tilhill manager must **ALWAYS** be received **BEFORE** you start **ANY** work.

For all harvesting work the pre-commencement meeting must also have been completed with information on the discussions held and carrying signatures to confirm understanding, held on the pre-commencement meeting checklist form as a record.

Here are some reminders of importance of a clear instruction to start work and the pre-commencement:

### Client authorisation

We may be waiting for a client to authorise the work. We need this authorisation to confirm the instruction to proceed.

**Remember: No one gets paid if a client hasn't authorised the work!**

### Regulatory authorisation

Often, we are planning work and preparing documentation to proceed while waiting on regulatory authorisations. This includes:

- A licence to fell.
- Planning consent
- Consent to work near or in a sensitive site or where there may be protected species.

These may be delayed and while this is frustrating we cannot proceed without the written consent and conditions of work from bodies like Forestry Commission Scotland, NRW, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission or Natural England.

### Consultation with neighbours

While we usually start this early on when planning work, there may be times when we are waiting on resolution or agreement from neighbours or other interested parties.

Work may be stopped, delays lengthy and additional costs significant in the event of a dispute.

Therefore, as a final check, have you got the following in place before you start work?:

- Tilhill Forestry Work Instruction or Harvesting Contractor Instruction Order.
- Risk Assessment (site specific).
- A hung up tree plan for any chainsaw work.
- Emergency Response Card (and Site Safety Rules for harvesting work).
- Clear Hazard and Constraints Map.
- COSHH Assessments (where, for example, chemicals, oils or pesticides are in use).
- Diffuse Pollution Plan (for sites of high risk of diffuse pollution).

And finally:

**Clear communication from the Tilhill Manager that work can start.**

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# Falling Deadwood

**Despite its ecological benefits deadwood can be a safety hazard to those accessing and working in the forest.**

■ Within the industry there have been some recent incidents where forestry workers have been injured by falling deadwood.

This serves as a timely reminder to ensure you are wearing your hard hat and to look up into the canopy while you are walking or working in the forest to determine if it is safe to be in that area.

If deadwood is present stop and determine the best way to proceed – this may be by working in a different area and allowing the deadwood to fall naturally whilst there is no one in the area or by risk assessing the best way to safely remove the deadwood.

## TILHILL FORESTRY Toolbox Talk

**Deadwood**

**What?**  
Deadwood is an important part of a healthy forest. It provides habitats and feeding opportunities for mosses, fungi, insects, birds and animals and as it rots releases nutrients back to the forest.

In forests certified under UKWAS, the minimum provision of standing and fallen deadwood should be aiming towards 20m<sup>3</sup>/ha or 5-10% of the average stand volume across the whole woodland area.

The larger the diameter of standing deadwood the better this will be ecologically (i.e. stems > 20cm diameter).

**Where?**

Deadwood should be left where it is likely to provide the greatest ecological benefit:

- Riparian zones which form corridors of semi-natural vegetation through the forest.
- Remnant areas of broadleaves which are usually associated with the riparian zone.
- Natural Reserves and Long-Term Retentions identified as part of the UKWAS plan.
- Adjacent to areas of semi-natural vegetation.

**Why?**

**Avoid environmental harm:** Managed standing deadwood is an important part of the forest ecosystem and can easily be damaged during ground preparation operations.

**✓ DO**

Look for opportunities to leave deadwood where this links with existing areas of deadwood, riparian habitats, remnant broadleaf woodland or areas identified as Natural Reserves or Long-Term Retentions.

**✗ DON'T**

Damage any fallen deadwood piles or standing deadwood during site preparation for restocking.

Deadwood is an important ecological resource, the provision of which should be linked with other areas identified for ecological management.

There may be value in creating high stumps which are more wind stable compared to whole trees.

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# Importance of Wearing Eye Protection

**During recent months there has been an increase in the number of eye injuries to Tilhill Forestry staff and our contractors.**

■ These incidents have occurred when the injured parties have been accessing their working area and not when they have been carrying out harvesting, forestry or maintenance related tasks.

The most recent incident was where the injured person was attempting to find a way through the crop and a branch flicked back into his eye causing a minor injury. The injured person was wearing a hard hat with a visor attached but had not put the visor down in front of his eyes/face.

It is important to remember that where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of an eye injury, e.g. when walking through a tight crop with low branches, eye protection should be worn.

There are a number of options for eye protection. Ensure you have the correct PPE for the task.

Hard Hat with Visor



Safety Glasses/Over Glasses



Safety Goggles



# Driving While Tired

**Driving while tired can turn even the best drivers amongst us into dangerous drivers.**

■ A full day out in the forest planting, spraying or carrying out harvesting activities together with battling against the weather can leave you feeling fatigued by the end of the day.

The risk factors include:-

- Driving for more than 2 hours without a break.
- Driving on less sleep than normal.
- Driving on monotonous roads like motorways.
- Driving in the dark.
- Driving in the early hours of the morning.

## How fatigue affects your driving

Fatigue has a huge impact on your driving and can affect your ability to drive safely. Its effects are similar to those of drink driving. You are 50% more likely to die or be the cause of a fatal accident if you fall asleep at the wheel.

Driving while tired or fatigued can result in:

- Slower reaction times.
- Being unable to brake or swerve.
- Lack of concentration – errors in calculating speed and distance are common.
- Reduced vigilance and poor judgement.
- Nodding off – even for a few seconds can result in dire consequences.

### Learning Points:

1. Plan your journey.
2. Plan a 20 minute break every 2 hours.
3. Split the journey, share the driving if possible.
4. Take a break during the working day.
5. If you feel tired STOP and consider drinking two strong caffeine drinks.
6. Nap for about 15 minutes.
7. Avoid driving if you would normally be asleep.

# Wildcat!

**Tilhill has been finding out more about the Wildcats in our forests in the Highlands.**

■ We're supporting a local wildcat group to monitor their presence with some strategically placed cameras in our forests. Sadly, no Wildcats have been caught on camera yet, but plenty of pinemarten, foxes and curious humans peering into the camera and giving it a good shake!

Very few people have seen a Wildcat, it's Scotland's most threatened mammal with perhaps only a few hundred still alive.

**Here are a few facts to raise awareness of this rare and elusive cat species:**

## What to look out for?

Wildcat are found in woodland, scrub, rough grassland and moorland. They have dens for breeding (Feb to August) and shelter. Dens could be in:

- Piles of rocks, logs or dense brash.
- Cavities in tree roots.
- Fox earths, badger setts and rabbit warrens.
- Thickets of gorse or juniper.

Signs of Wildcat presence around potential dens include flattened vegetation, smoothed bark on branches, hair or prey remains.

## Why check for presence of Wildcat?

We must protect this threatened species and prevent its disturbance or loss.

Protected by law, it is illegal to carry out any forestry work within 200 metres of a breeding den or 100 metres of a resting place without taking steps to positively avoid damage

## TILHILL FORESTRY Toolbox Talk



### Wildcats

#### What?

Wildcats are widely distributed throughout north and central Scotland, north of the Highland Boundary Fault (which runs from Arran to Stonehaven).

Very few people have seen a wildcat – its Scotland's most threatened mammal, with perhaps only a few hundred still alive. It is classed as a European Protected Species.



Larger and heavier than a domestic cat, wildcats have a thick coat with brown and black stripes (no spots) and a thick tail with distinct black rings ending in a black blunt tip.



Locations where wildcats have been recorded in the past. Source: SNH

#### Look out for:

Wildcats inhabit a mosaic of woodland, scrub, rough grassland and moorland.

**Den sites:** used for breeding (Feb to Aug) and for shelter at other times. Check:

- Piles of rocks, logs or dense brash.
- Cavities in tree roots.
- Fox earths, badger setts, rabbit warrens.
- Thickets of gorse or juniper.

Recently used dens may have flattened vegetation, smoothed bark on branches, hair or prey remains. Scats are not commonly found at den sites.



Paw prints are smaller than dog or fox, rounded with four toes, no claw marks and not much bigger than a 10p coin.



Rock piles in woodland provide suitable den sites.

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and without an appropriate licence. Wildcats and their dens even when not in use are protected.

We've a new Toolbox Talk on Wildcats prepared by one of our Ecologist's Jenny Mulgrew giving key information on this legally protected species. Please brief this to your teams to raise awareness in areas where Wildcat may be present.

**Toolbox Talk 82 – Wildcats**



# December 2017 – 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.  
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**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.