

Safety and Assurance Bulletin



Protecting the Forestry Industry – working together against rural crime

Thieves entered one of our managed forests last month and caused significant damage to a brand new Ponsse Scorpion harvester and a forwarder on site.

■ Additionally, at the end of last year we had equipment including chemicals stolen from a store. An adjacent Forestry Commission site was also targeted.

Other trends we are seeing include the theft of tools from machines and site safes, lights and fuel both from bowzers and machines and joy riding. Crimes like these leave our forestry and harvesting contractors with costly damage, increased insurance premiums and significant downtime and subsequent loss of income.

Additionally, where fuel and chemicals are involved environmental pollution is common and clean-up costs significant.

In the recent harvesting site incident, the thieves first tried ramming the forest barrier but despite it buckling and some headway being made with a post, the barrier held, eventually though, they gained access using an angle-grinder. Once in the property they broke into the machines taking equipment and causing significant damage.

Fortunately, the activities were caught on camera and we feel confident that these trespassers will be caught.

Common to both our recent incidents was that site security was already at a premium. In both the forest and our storage yard CCTV surveillance was in place, stores were locked as was security fencing and forest barriers.



Above: CCTV is key to ensuring the trespassers are caught.

What more can we do?

- Make sure cameras are at site entrances and barriers and that they provide sufficient coverage.
- The more cameras the better. Some contractors are using cameras with SIM cards which send Alerts when activated. We've been told this works well in making you aware of unexpected activity on site.
- Use Cameras with Bluetooth that send information to a nearby hidden base.
- Make things difficult – we are installing double barriers on some sites, it also gives more opportunity for camera footage.

As a result of these events and a series of persistent crimes within some remote forestry working sites in the North West, we are working to support the Forestry Commission to seek a joined-up approach together with sufficient designated resources from the Police.

We all need to work together to stop these incidents. We would welcome any thoughts on how we can make our sites more secure.

Remember:

- If you are alerted to an incident on site, don't be tempted to tackle criminals on your own - notify the police immediately.
- Don't use fuel bowzers to block stores or protect machinery – this results in more significant damage, spillage and pollution should criminal activity take place.

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Hung up Trees

In 2016, we introduced the mandatory requirement to agree and record a plan on how hung up trees are to be dealt with on sites where motor manual tree felling is taking place.

■ We have updated our systems to reflect the agreed changes and issued guidance on what controls must be in place.

Hung up trees are a major risk associated with chainsaw felling and importantly are a hazard that we know will likely occur on most motor manual felling sites. Almost all harvesting requires some chainsaw felling to deal with edge/oversized trees and trees situated in inaccessible terrain.

The simple rules are:

- Contractors must provide a suitable plan and we have developed a template which can be used by contractors if required.

- The plan is reviewed during the pre-commencement meeting.
- The plan shall be communicated and understood by all.
- Suitable equipment must be on site at all times.
- Managers and supervisors must test that the controls identified in the plan are available on site.

Please ensure that a simple message is communicated to all chainsaw operators prior to work commencing:

CHAINSAW OPERATORS MUST NOT FELL A TREE INTO ANOTHER TO RELEASE A HUNG UP TREE (DOMINO FELLING)

Further reading:

[GN74 Hung Up Trees](#)

Method Statement	
Hung Up Tree Removal	
Site Name:	
Contractor:	
Forest Works Manager:	
Competent Operators on Site:	
Predominant Species:	
Level of Public Access <small>(delete accordingly)</small>	High/Medium/Low
Method of Securing Area <small>(delete accordingly)</small>	Immediate Takedown/Mark With Tape
Preferred Takedown Method <small>(delete accordingly)</small>	Harvester/Forwarder/Machine Winch/Hand Winch
Method of Take Down	

continued

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Guidance Note

Hung up Trees

Over many years in forestry and timber harvesting, hung up trees have been a significant cause of fatalities. It is inevitable that trees will become hung up from time to time and they must be dealt with safely. Chainsaw operators cannot be offered protection from a falling tree and a history of poor practice dealing with hung trees exacerbates the need to manage this risk effectively.

As with the management of all risk, it is best done at the planning stage of works. When planning a site, look to minimise the amount of motor manual felling by using mechanised harvesting whenever reasonably practicable. 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.

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 hung up tree. Winches are heavy and will often be left in the van on site, as a result, many operators have been tempted to take short cuts.

Hung Up Tree Plan

Tilhill Forestry require, that where chainsaw operations are taking place, the main contractor devises and agrees with the Forest Works Manager a plan showing how trees that become hung up are to be dealt with. This must be in the risk assessment and discussed at the Pre-Commencement Meeting. This must take into account various aspects:

- **The Site**
Consider the location of the woodland/forest and the level of expected public access through and around the work site. The frequency of the third party access and the proximity to the worksite will determine if trees must be made safe at the time or if they could be taped off at a safe distance and made safe within an agreed time frame. Trees that are unlikely to present a risk to the public due to their position may be taped off and left until they can be brought down safely as long as they are adequately marked and all land users, including the owner, are notified.
- **The People**
All chainsaw operators must have the correct felling competencies for the work being undertaken. This must be up to date and within current refresher periods. Winddown trees require more experience and specific competencies. These must be in place to match the trees being felled.
All operatives, especially the chainsaw operator, must understand how hung up trees are to be dealt with on each site.
- **The Equipment**
There is a range of equipment that can be used to make hung up trees safe:
• Turning bar/stop. Either a breaker bar or turning stop can be used to try to dislodge a hung up tree in the first instance. These are portable and easy to carry with the chainsaw operator. They will free some trees but those more firmly hung up will not be released with this method.
- **Tape and Radio**. When the Turning bar/stop has not freed the hung up tree, radio for help or to notify other operators on site. The tape is to be used to tape the risk zone around the hung up tree off if it cannot be made safe at the time. The risk zone will be determined by the position of the hung up tree and the surrounding trees. This would normally be a circle with a radius of 1 1/2 tree lengths but parts of this circle may be reduced where there is reasonable certainty of the likely direction of fall.
- **Machinery**. Often the quickest and most efficient means of making a hung up tree safe is the use of a machine to winch, lower or pull a hung up tree down. All other persons must be out of the risk zone of the machine and hung up tree.
- **Portable winches**. These are often heavy and take time to set up. They do however remain a useful tool in dealing with hung up trees. There are a variety of winches available. They must be CE marked and designed for pulling. You must also match the strength of the winch to the size of the tree or the task to be performed. Many manufacturers make models in differing sizes. Chainsaw winches and self-powered capstan winches can be very powerful and deal with large trees.

Summary

Hung up trees remain a significant and potentially fatal risk for chainsaw operators. We need to plan on each site how these are to be dealt with, and this must be communicated to all operators on site.

Often, the chainsaw operator's best tool will be their radio to call for assistance. Whatever the plan is for each site it must be noted on the risk assessment and discussed at the Pre-Commencement Meeting and with the chainsaw operator when they arrive on site.

GN74 Version 1 – Owner: Chris Pike Date of issue: September 2016 1 of 1

Above: A template is available for contractors to use if required.

Weather Watch

The recent inclement weather has increased the number of incidents resulting from slippery conditions.

■ There have been a number of Road Traffic Incidents due to ice and snow and two significant near misses where machinery has slipped while on site. The most recent occurred at the K2 sawmill in Fort William where logs slipped from the grab of a timber haulage truck.

Luckily, these incidents have not resulted in significant personal injury or environmental impact but some vehicle damage has occurred.

Remember:

- Monitor weather reports and plan work accordingly, parts of your work area may be more affected than others.
- Note any adverse conditions on your risk assessment.
- If you consider that the conditions are not safe to work in, stop and speak to your manager. As with high winds, the people in the best place to judge conditions are those on site on the day.
- Keep conditions on review all day.
- Plan your journey – including the return leg.
- Main roads may be clear, but side and forest roads may still be icy or even impassable. If it is unsafe to drive these roads, stop and contact your manager.

As a general rule:

IF IN DOUBT, STOP AND CONTACT YOUR MANAGER.

				Group Management Manual			
Section	Document	Page	Date				
1	101	Page 1 of 1	25 Jan 16				
Replaces Issue Dated: 23 Mar 11							
FO/G/H&S-026 Accident /Incident Flash Report							
Circulation- Chief Executive, CFO, Mill Managers, ESH Coordinators, Production and Maintenance Managers, Group ESH Manager							
INCIDENT FLASH REPORT							
Site: <input type="checkbox"/> BoG <input type="checkbox"/> CAR <input type="checkbox"/> DAL <input type="checkbox"/> Eari <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ft Wm <input type="checkbox"/> LAT <input type="checkbox"/> NBR <input type="checkbox"/> Rts <input type="checkbox"/> STN <input type="checkbox"/> Other							
Incident type: <input type="checkbox"/> Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Damage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Near Hit <input type="checkbox"/> Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Emission <input type="checkbox"/> Spill							
What Happened?							
<p>At 10:20hrs on 18th January we had an incident where a log slipped from a Volvo grab and struck the cab of the log delivery truck.</p>  <p>As the Volvo was reversing with the last half grab of logs, its rear wheel sank into a pothole, causing the grab to swing sideways and the icy log slipped out.</p> <p>Nobody was injured as a result of this incident and damage was relatively minor.</p> <p>The ground conditions and inclement weather played a major part in this incident but it was exacerbated by the placement of the beavers on the truck. This meant that the Volvo operator was unable to grab the logs at a central point and with it being the last grab from the trailer it was not a full grab.</p> <p>The full Fort William management team will be considering a range of technical and procedural solutions for providing a suitable place of safety and loading assistance for log delivery drivers on tomorrow's safety tour.</p>							
<p>Key Learning</p> <p>We cannot always prevent a log from slipping from a Volvo grab but we can protect the driver of the truck being unloaded, by removing him to a place of safety during the unloading process. Consideration should also be given to weather conditions and how these may impact on ground conditions and ability to grip logs tightly in the Volvo grabs.</p>							
Amendment 1		FO/G/H&S-026		Authorised by Jay Beamish			

Machine Operators Supervision and Mentoring

FISA issued a Safety Alert in December to highlight the importance of appropriate post-training supervision and mentoring for all newly qualified/inexperienced Forest Machine Operators (FMO).

■ Newly qualified/inexperienced operators must be supervised and mentored by an experienced operator (who has suitable experience in the relevant machine) until they have consolidated their training and demonstrated that they are fully proficient and competent.

Key elements of the machine operator 'record of registration' (historically known as the 'Provisional Licence') are:

- It is the employer's duty of care to ensure that sufficient and suitable supervision takes place.
- If you're self-employed you take on that employer's duty and you should ensure suitable supervision is in place.
- The supervision should be risk assessed, planned and documented.
- FISA recommends a minimum period of 6 months post-qualification for supervision but this is for guidance only.
- The supervisor must be suitably qualified and competent in the machinery and work they supervise.

In The News Elsewhere

Driver Escapes with Life after Power Strike

■ A Director of a London-based waste contractor has been fined and given a suspended sentence after a lorry contacted 132kV overhead power lines in North London.

The Court heard how the company was contracted to construct a 'bund' (earth hill) directly beneath overhead power lines.

During the work a tipping lorry working on site came into contact with the overhead power lines causing arcing which damaged both the wires and the lorry. The lorry driver escaped without injury although contact with power lines can result in death.

HSE investigators found that no controls were in place to prevent vehicles coming into contact with overhead power lines.

The court heard that the company had received advice from UK Power Networks about working near the lines on a number of occasions both before and after the incident.

The company had "continually failed to implement controls" and reduce the bund level to achieve minimum statutory clearances.



The company director pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £7,068.34.

The judge also imposed a six month prison sentence suspended for 12 months and a Director Disqualification order for a period of seven years.

Speaking after the hearing, the HSE inspector said:

"This was a very serious incident and it is fortunate nobody was injured. The incident could easily have been avoided by introducing control measures and safe working practices.

Companies should be aware that the HSE will not hesitate to take enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

Ground worker set on fire by cable strike

■ A company undertaking excavation work has been fined for safety breaches after a workman was burned when underground electrical cables were damaged.

Magistrates heard that the employee was excavating the ground when an electrical cable was struck and he "was set on fire" causing significant burns to his lower body. He was hospitalised for one month and unable to work for six weeks.

HSE investigators found that the company failed to adequately plan, manage and monitor the construction work. Drawings were not obtained from the utility company detailing the position of underground cables and the ground was not rescanned to a sufficient depth whilst excavation work was proceeding.

The injured workman and co-worker responsible for scanning the ground did not receive training for their tasks contrary to the requirements contained in the company risk assessment and method statement.

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £25,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3979.68.

After the hearing the HSE inspector said:

"The contractor's injuries were very serious, and he could have easily been killed. This injury would have been prevented if the company had planned and implemented safe methods of working, and provided the necessary information and training to its workers."

Learning Points:

All work in or around Overhead Power Lines and underground services must follow the FISA 804 Guidance and Tilhill document Arrangements for Safety with Electricity and Other Services on Site AR/26.



Electricity at work: Forestry



FISA Safety Guide 804



February 2018 – 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.

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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.