

WORKING GROUP ON THE WEARING OF GLOVES FOR CHAINSAW WORK

1. When chainsaw guides were inaugurated it was decided that it was necessary to require the wearing of protective gloves to assist in the prevention of –
 - injury from contact with natural hazards such as thorns ;
 - injury from cutting of backs of hands in snedding ;
 - vibration white finger ; and
 - loss of control through hands becoming cold in bad weather.
2. However, conditions have changed since then in that –
 - chainsaws now come equipped with chainbrakes; and
 - better training has reduced accidents considerably.
3. Therefore the time has come to review the continued use of gloves for chainsaw users. It should be noted that an exception to the wearing of gloves was always accepted for users of chainsaws off the ground.
4. There have been developments in the quality of chainsaw gloves but they remain relatively expensive to the purchaser who may be unable to earn sufficient reward from cutting trees to justify maintenance of personal protective equipment. In reality there is a reluctance to wear chainsaw protective gloves, partly because in the more temperate parts of the United Kingdom, they become quickly saturated with rainwater, making hands both wet and cold and destroying the gloves.
5. There are gloves available to meet the threats –
 - cold
 - wet
 - danger from cutting.

Risk assessment must indicate which is the most important risk and decide which, if any, glove should be used.

6. Decision options are :
 - (a) Remove totally the requirement to wear gloves.
 - (b) Retain the existing guidance but issue instruction to enforcing authorities not to enforce their use.
 - (c) Leave the present situation as it is and do nothing.
 - (d) Remove the requirement to wear gloves for experienced operators but retain for new (define) operators and casual users.
 - (e) Require gloves of a suitable type (not necessarily chainsaw) based on risk assessment.
7. Members views are sought.

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