



Welcome to the first edition of *Arb News*, a newsletter to help keep you up to date with health and safety news.

Here are some sobering accident statistics relating to tree work:

- The odds of someone in forestry and arboriculture sustaining a major or fatal injury in any one year are estimated to be worse than 1 in 120.
- Last year (2002/03) five people were killed while undertaking tree work.
- In the ten years between 1992/93 and 2001/02, 48 people have been killed while working in forestry and arboriculture.

## MEWPs for tree work

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published a report into the use of mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs) for tree work.

It was prepared by Forest Research, an agency of the Forestry Commission, and evaluates the factors affecting the performance of MEWPs and which types are suitable for particular types of sites and operations. It also provides information to help employers and contractors use MEWPs safely. We are grateful for the help given by the Arboricultural Association, the Forestry Contracting Association and others who ensured it reflected arboricultural best practice.

All work at height in a tree is high risk. It is important that the most appropriate means of access is selected and used. The reason for conducting this research was to help arborists and arboricultural businesses make informed judgments about the access method and work equipment required for a particular tree or task. For some work MEWPs will be the safest option but HSE recognises that they can be used alongside or in combination with tree-climbing techniques.

Every arboricultural business should assess each job carefully and use MEWPs where appropriate. They are particularly suited to tree work in urban areas; work on diseased or dying trees; where tree climbing is difficult because of tree species or form; and where there are several trees to work on.

Billy Robb, Chair of the Forestry Contracting Association, Arboriculture Specialist Group said: 'Due to the likely effects of the new Work at Height Regulations in 2004, the recognition that arborists work in a high-risk environment, and the knock-on effect with high insurance premiums this year, it is time our industry took the use of MEWPs more seriously. The new HSE report lays out exactly how to do this. It is very thoroughly researched and gives extremely helpful practical guidance for the benefit of our industry.'

Copies of *Use and effectiveness of mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) for tree work* RR123 ISBN 0 7176 2701 2, price £15, are available from HSE Books. The full text of the report is available free on the HSE website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr123.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr123.htm)

## Contractor fined £3500

A Local Authority contractor in London was fined £3500 after a member of the public was seriously injured when a 7 m lime tree was felled into a road. The lime was felled by a trained arborist in one go even though it was sited on a pavement near a crossroads. The contracting company did not carry out and record a site-specific risk assessment and only used signs and traffic cones to prevent access to the felling zone. The person injured was walking along the pavement towards the crossroads and was hit by the falling tree, which fractured her skull and later triggered a convulsion.

*"This accident could have easily been prevented if an on-site risk assessment had been carried out before work started. The tree should have been sectionally dismantled and precautions such as barriers should have been in place to prevent the public approaching the work area."*

## Recent HSE publications

*Preventing falls from boom-type mobile elevating work platforms*  
Information Sheet  
MISC614

Visit HSE's Contract Research Reports web pages ([www.hse.gov.uk/research/crr\\_htm/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/crr_htm/index.htm)) to find out more about top-handled chainsaws (CRR402), industrial rope access (CRR364) and a review of harness suspension (CRR451).

## Your views

What do you think of *Arb News*?  
What would you like to see in future editions?  
Send your views to Mike Walters at the address below.

To receive this newsletter by e-mail in future please send your e-mail address to:

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## New forestry and arboriculture leaflets

HSE is pleased to announce that a new series of leaflets for the forestry and arboriculture industries is now available. They were produced jointly by HSE and members of the Arboriculture and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG).

AFAG was set up by the Health and Safety Commission's Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) to deal specifically with arboriculture and forestry. Members are from across the forestry and arboriculture industry, with representatives from major industry bodies and organisations. AFAG agreed to take on aspects of the work that would have disappeared with the loss of the Forestry and Arboriculture Safety and Training Council (FASTCo), in particular to update and replace the series of free FASTCo safety guides.

The 34 free leaflets are designed to give the same practical guidance as the old guides and can be used as checklists for employers, supervisors and the self-employed. Now revised and updated, they cover topics such as top-handled chainsaws, tree-climbing operations, aerial tree rescue, emergency planning, and training and certification.

Single free copies of the leaflets (or priced packs of 15) are available from HSE Books or they can be printed direct from HSE's website at: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/forindex.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/forindex.htm).

## New Work at Height Regulations 2004

New Regulations covering work at height are to be introduced by the autumn of 2004. They will be relevant to, and have an impact on, arboriculture. A Consultative Document will be published in late autumn 2003 giving you or your trade association the opportunity to comment on the draft Regulations and Guidance.

Further information can be obtained from David King: [david.king@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:david.king@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

## Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance (ELCI)

HSE's Agriculture and Food Sector welcomes the joint arboriculture and forestry industry approach to the main brokers and insurance companies. This aims to ensure that arboriculture and forestry businesses can continue to take out ELCI policies, at a reasonable premium, by demonstrating that they have an effective health and safety management system in place. It is a legal requirement to hold ELCI where necessary. Make sure your clients know you carry appropriate insurance - we know less reputable businesses may be tempted to drop ELCI when faced with huge premium increases at renewal time.

## Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995  
Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) (HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).)

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