

Treework E-bulletin - Issue No. 1 (June 2010)

Welcome to the 1st edition of HSE's Treework E-bulletin.

This E-bulletin replaces Treework News which was published twice yearly. This will enable HSE to provide more frequent update of news and information and keep you informed of the latest issues affecting treework.

RECENT FATAL INCIDENTS

Sadly, HSE are currently investigating a number of fatalities. Since the beginning of 2010, four people have been killed while involved in treework, three of these since the beginning of April. Two incidents were related to work in forestry and involved felling operations and two occurred in arboriculture and involved falls from trees. These are very sobering statistics. Details of previous fatal accidents and their causes are available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/resources/casestudies.htm>.

Although the recent upturn in harvesting and sawmilling work is good news for the industry, please don't let this become a recipe for accidents because you are rushing to meet orders. Don't cut corners - think carefully and plan any work activity.

A trawl through HSE's enforcement pages reveal a number of instances where chainsaw users have been found to have inadequate or no training. This is essential to ensure that these machines can be used safely.

TRAINING RATIOS FOR CHAINSAW COURSES

HSE is concerned that the maximum ratio of 4 trainees to one instructor stated in HSE's guidance booklet 'Chainsaws at Work' (INDG 317) may not be being adhered to by some training centres. Reports have been received of ratios of up to 10 trainees undertaking chainsaw courses (eg CS 31) with only one instructor 'supervising'.

Chain saws are probably the most dangerous machine any individual student is likely to handle, so HSE advises that the standards for training developed and adopted by the industry (through AFAG) must be adhered to.

In the event of a serious accident - possibly even a fatality, given the number of recent tragic incidents - HSE would be examining very closely what standards were being followed. This would also apply to recently 'trained' operators at work. In the event of a fatality, the Police take the lead to establish if there has been a case of manslaughter.

Remember - training organisations/providers and individuals could all be accountable or liable in the event of an accident. We would suggest that this issue should be reviewed by all training centres urgently and also discussed with insurance providers, as cover may be invalidated by not following the accepted industry practice and published guidance.

Guidance booklet (INDG 317) is available as a free download via the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg317.pdf>), or from HSE Books.

“FOCUS ON FORESTRY FIRST”

This is a new 3 year project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government/EU solely for the trees and timber sector within Wales. If you are based or work in Wales why not take this opportunity to obtain funding for training – to reduce accidents and improve your business? Further information is available from www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk

ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)

AFAG last met on 6 May. Key issues discussed with industry representatives included:

- AFAG’s workplan for 2010-11 & HSE’s new Strategy (AFAG/10/01);
- Review of AFAG Projects (AFAG/10/02), including the new work on Small scale self-propelled machinery in forestry, Felling of Large Trees and Cranes in arboriculture;
- Communications - in particular the new ‘Training & Safety’ Arena at APF 2010 and a similar ‘Skills and Learning Zone’ at Saltex 2010, AFAG Guidance (recent/proposed leaflets, eg on MEWPs and Electricity at Work: Forestry), update and feedback from the industry on HSE’s new Tree Work Website and Safety and Health Awareness Days for forestry managers and arboriculture clients.
- Forestry Summit (AFAG paper 10/03 refers) – this is proposed in 2011 and will be aimed at senior managers in forestry businesses.
- Training and Certification - Current issues with certification and CS Units (AFAG/10/04) and progress on revision of AFAG 805.

AFAG papers and meeting notes are available from the AIAC/AFAG webpage:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/aiac/afag/index.htm>

BRUSH CUTTER SAFETY ALERT

A safety alert has been issued by HSE following a fatal accident involving a brush cutter, after the cutting mechanism was replaced with a non-standard component. See:

<http://news.hse.gov.uk/2010/03/25/safety-alert-use-of-chain-flailnon-standard-accessories-on-brush-cutters/>

PLANTING PESTICIDE TREATED TREES

HSE has issued guidance on precautions to be taken when planting saplings treated with pesticides. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/articles/planting-pesticide-treated-trees.htm>

LYME DISEASE

Although Lyme Disease is relatively uncommon in the UK, the number of cases is increasing steadily. People working in or visiting woodland are at risk of being infected. For further information see the Royal Forestry Society fact sheet available at www.rfs.org.uk/learning/ticks_and_Lyme_disease.

CONTACT WITH OVERHEAD POWER LINES: A reminder

Contact with overhead power lines continues to cause fatalities and serious injuries. The Energy Network Association (ENA) gives guidance on what to do in the event of a machine or load contacting live cables and emergency contact telephone numbers for all of the UK electricity operators on its website.

visit: http://2009.energynetworks.org/storage/emergency-contact-nos_090624.pdf

We advise that you make a copy of the guidance and take note of your local emergency contact numbers NOW and save it on all drivers’ mobile phones, etc.... Ensure all staff have

read the guidance and we suggest you keep a copy in vehicle cabs .You never know when it might be needed.... It could save your life!

RIGGING AND DISMANTLING RESEARCH

A very successful workshop was held at Beddgelert on 29 June to demonstrate the findings and practical recommendations from the recent research. This event involved many leading figures involved in this 'high-risk' activity across GB and Germany. The research was sponsored by HSE and the Forestry Commission and the 362 page report is available (free!) on HSE's website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr668.htm> .

HSE, AFAG and the Arb Association are considering how best to summarise the research and get it out to all in the industry, as it highlights new information which should be used to inform risk assessments and to develop training on new techniques. Meanwhile a series of 4 articles written by the research team are being published in Essential Arb and will also be posted on HSE's website. The first is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/articles/rigging-research.pdf>

SHOWS

HSE has recently attended the Arb Fair and will be represented in the new demonstration areas at Saltex 'Skills and Learning Zone (7- 9 September).

HSE, together with its' partner organisations from AFAG, will also be present at the APF 'Safety and Health in Forestry Arena ' (23 – 25 September). The new 'AFAG Safety and Health in Forestry' arena will vastly improve the experience of those looking for advice and guidance on health, safety and training. For the first time, many of the major organisations involved will be present on one site - providing a one-stop-shop for those looking for information and advice on how to improve quality, productivity and safety. There will also be a full program of working demonstrations and seminars on each of the 3 days covering a wide range of topics of interest to contractors, operators and managers. These will cover a wide range of topics including chainsaw safety, forestry site management, first aid and emergency provisions on sites, working near railways and using railway crossings, avoiding contact with power lines; health issues such as noise and vibration and many more. Importantly, those attending the safety demonstrations can leave with a 'record of attendance' that they will be able to add to their training portfolios to help demonstrate CPD. This innovation, supported by trade associations, will be of particular value to contractors and operators who increasingly find this type of evidence as part of the tenders they compete for. Organisations contributing to the AFAG Safety and Health Arena include the Forestry Commission, Lantra Awards, Lantra Sector Skills Council, Network Rail, City & Guilds NPTC, Office of Rail Regulation, Arboriculture Association, the Forestry Contractors Association, the Energy Network Associations, United Kingdom Forest Products Association, Confor and HSE.

You can view all of the past E-bulletins and Treework News at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/resources/index.htm>

Please feel free to use this information and pass it on, using your own networks.