

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (AIAC)

Overview of the AFAG meetings held on 5th December 2019 & 11th June 2020

(Previous AFAG minutes and papers are available on the AIAC / AFAG webpage)

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

Significant matters discussed

1. **Chainsaw Competence Levels System** – this is being produced by FISA and was introduced at the December meeting. It was produced following HSE's focus on this topic due to it being a common causal factor of forestry incidents. In the June meeting it was discussed as being at the final stages having had wide industry consultation. It has since been published with additional detail provided in appendices covering an Auditors Standard and an Outline Audit System. It is likely to replace FISA's refresher / supervisor training. The system is to ensure chainsaw competence (training and experience) is nationally defined, assessed and logged. A commercial Ap has been produced to record decisions. It was recognised that there are similarities between the new Level system in forestry and the arboriculture industries' dormant Register of Tree Work Operatives (R2) and it was recognised that the arb industry will need to review this.
2. **Two line working in arboriculture** - In December it was reported that the AA's revised ICOP (Industry Code of Practice for Arboriculture –Tree Work at Height) & supporting TGs (Technical Guides) are out for consultation following production incorporating collaboration between the AA, LANTRA & HSE. These were produced in response to HSE reiterating that 2-line working (working line and backup/ anchor line) is required to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005. In the June meeting it was advised that the ICOP had been released and details of the TGs was provided (TG1 Tree climbing, TG2 Use of tools, TG3 Rigging and dismantling trees, TG4 Use of mobile cranes in Treework TG5 Use of MEWPS in Treework) to be released late Autumn. Combined AA / LANTRA introductory training on this new guidance will be hosted online in November 2020.
3. **Forestry inc FISA updates** – in December it was reported that FISA's GMHSF (**Guide to Managing H&S in Forestry**) role specific revised guides were being worked on (and are now published). FISA **haulage** work at height guidance and a CPC training course has been produced. Following a UK near fatal accident there has been a focus on harvester **chainshot** risk and how to reduce this which is now covered by a FISA bulletin. Traction assist and associated rigging training outline was discussed (and FISA guidance since published), a FISA **LOLER** (during maintenance) bulletin and welfare on forestry sites guide has been published. In the June meeting it was discussed that **advanced felling techniques** with reference to the Levels system is to be included within FISA's chainsaw WG remit. Input to **planning (risk assessment)** for chainsaw operations will also be covered in this group. Landowner WG will be involved in this and covered in the **FWM CPD** which is being produced in response to the cessation of FISA refresher / supervisor and FWM training.
4. **RIDDOR Forestry incident analysis (2014 – 2018)** – in the June meeting this analysis reported 4 fatal accidents (all struck by object (mainly trees)), that ¼ of over 7 day injuries were lifting and slips and trips related followed by contact with machinery / objects. Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome

(HAVS), Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) and Lyme disease are the most significant notifiable health issues. Underreporting was discussed (only 99 notifications in this 5 year period).

5. **RIDDOR Dangerous occurrences (DO) in arboriculture** – it was highlighted that RIDDOR requires that notification (as a DO) to HSE when lifting equipment collapses / overturns / fails and that this is not occurring from the arb industry and that this includes failure of a rope.
6. **Chainsaw trousers adequacy** – in June it was discussed that different Classes of chainsaw protective trousers exist and must be appropriately specified dependant on chainsaw speed but that heat exhaustion also has to be considered.
7. **Site specific risk assessments (RA)** – in June a discussion was had as to who and what detail should be concluded. It was outline that these should be proportionate to the level of the risk and a competent person should undertake the RA but that cooperation and coordination between those involved would be necessary. Aps can help capture this process.
8. **Standards work update** – no details were available at the December meeting and an update was requested from the UK Mirror group chair. In June it was reported that the **Woodchipper Standard** was delayed (has since been released but with UK dissent to sections in the foreword). **Chainshot protective screen Standard** about to be released and will require screens to be significantly thicker. **Traction Assist Standard** is at draft stage and HSE are involved and have ensured that the new FISA Guide is aligned with it. **Battery / electrically operated equipment Standard** at draft stage. **Tree Shears** were discussed and the fact that if used in a forestry setting then the Forestry Standard would require forestry standard operator protection (ROPS etc).
9. **COVID** – In the June meeting it was reported that the FISA 'Working safely during coronavirus in forestry' had been published and is now supported by example risk assessments. Reluctance to share facilities has been relieved by provision of extra outside hand washing stations (not reliance on hand gel alone). Sanitation of tools and shared vehicles must be focused on. Training during COVID must look at alternative means and be risk based in terms of delay. Tree surveys prioritisation should also be risk based not just cancelled.
10. **ECC (European Chainsaw Certificate)** - acceptance of the ECC as equivalent to UK qualification (as a national standard as defined in the PUWER ACOP) is an issue requiring clarification. Issues to be looked at include minimum requirements, auditing and verification and prevention of divergence. HSE is looking to produce a paper for the next meeting setting out what might be acceptable in terms of PUWER.
11. **AOB** – December meeting: **Arb insurance** becoming less easy to obtain. Feedback to them in terms of risk control was discussed as a way of improving this. HSE's new **mild steel fume** guidance was highlighted. It was confirmed that **2 people in a MEWP** even with a barrier undertaking chainsaw operations should be justified in risk assessment. June meeting: **Captain Hook** positioning device safe use (not an anchor) **Arborist Apprenticeships**. IFATE (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) T level is a new technical level equivalent to A level. **Agricultural Land Management** and productions includes Tree woodland management and maintenance

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November 2020