



# Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry

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## Industry Guidance for Contractors

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## 1. Introduction

During forestry operations, Contractors, Sub-contractors and other forestry workers are the people most at risk. It is the people working on the ground who would suffer directly as a result of poor health and safety standards.

You have a responsibility to manage your work and the work of your employees and to co-ordinate and co-operate with the Forest Works Manager (FWM) and sub-contractors and others on site. The term manage includes planning, managing, monitoring and co-ordinating work under your control to ensure health and safety are achieved.

The effort you devote to carrying out your duties should be in proportion to the size and complexity of the project and the range and nature of the health and safety risks involved.

Thorough planning, risk assessment and supervision are essential elements of all work and help ensure safe and effective operations.

### 1.1 General introduction

This guide is based on sound industry practice and will particularly help small businesses and organisations to deliver forestry operations in a way to help avoid injury and ill health.

There are five guides – one for each of the main roles that may be involved in forestry operations. These guides seek to help everyone better understand what they and others need to do to work well together, to comply with safety law and to conduct forestry work in a safe and healthy manner.

#### The five guides are:

- Landowner (including Agent)
- Forestry Works Manager (FWM)
- Contractor
- Sub-contractor
- Worker

### 1.2 Who is a Contractor?

Anyone who directly engages forestry workers or manages forestry work is a contractor. A contractor may be an individual, a sole trader, a self-employed worker or a business which carries out, manages or controls forestry work. This includes companies that use their own workforce to do forestry work on their own premises.

The duties of contractors apply whether their workers are employees, self-employed or agency workers.

### 1.3 What is the Contractor's role?

The main duty of a contractor is to plan and manage the forestry work under their control, so that it is carried out effectively and in a way that controls the risks to health and safety.

Contractors have a range of other duties that depend on whether more than one contractor is involved in the project. If more than one contractor is involved, each has duties to co-ordinate their activities with the others – in particular complying with directions given to them by the FWM.

A summary of all the main forestry work roles can be found in **Annex A**.

## 2. What do you have to do?

### 2.1 Plan and manage your work

To plan, manage and control health and safety risks you will need to:

#### Plan

Planning and carrying out commercial forestry operations involves a number of health and safety tasks. As a contractor it is your responsibility to:

- address the FWM's instructions regarding the Landowner's requirements and understand any pre-work information provided by the FWM, e.g. the Outline Risk Assessment
- identify high-risk elements of work, e.g. use of chainsaws, and eliminate such operations where possible
- develop a site-specific risk assessment and safe systems of work in collaboration with the FWM. Ensure the assessment appropriately considers associated activities such as low loaders, fuelling and other haulage.
- ensure those carrying out your work have the right skills, knowledge and awareness, current and relevant training, experience and supervision
- ensure those carrying out your work have the right plant, tools, equipment, materials and personal protective equipment
- appoint a competent supervisor to ensure adequate supervision

- agree with the FWM how information will be exchanged to allow both of you, and other contractors, to manage health and safety
- inform the FWM of any intention to sub-contract elements of your work and have arrangements in place to ensure the competence of these sub-contractors
- discuss with the FWM specific aspects of the site (and the Landowner's requirements) if they affect safe working practices (such as those set out in FISA and other industry best practice guides)
- consider how your work might affect anyone else likely to come onto the worksite or into contact with the work.

## Manage

You will manage the work of your employees and your sub-contractors on the site. To avoid each putting the others, or anyone else, at risk, it is your responsibility to:

- pass on relevant information and instructions to workers. Do this by briefing workers on the FWM's Outline Risk Assessment and your site-specific risk assessments. For higher-risk tasks, use a method statement to outline the agreed method, sequence and control measures to be used.
- ensure that your workers comply with the site safety rules and risk controls
- manage and supervise your employees and sub-contractors to ensure safe working even in your absence
- co-ordinate your work with that of other contractors where necessary and involve the FWM
- ensure your workers receive a meaningful site induction
- allow workers sufficient time to prepare and to carry out the work in a safe manner
- listen to issues raised by sub-contractors and workers and escalate issues to the FWM that you are unable to address
- manage changes (e.g. in site conditions, personal or instructions) and update plans, risk assessments and briefings accordingly.

Risk assessment resources, including a site-specific risk assessment template, are available from the FISA website at [www.ukfisa.com/safety-information/safety-library/risk-assessment.html](http://www.ukfisa.com/safety-information/safety-library/risk-assessment.html)

### 2.2 Provide the right supervision

You can assess the degree of supervision you will need to provide by considering the skills, knowledge, training,

experience and likely behaviour of the workers, as well as the level of risk associated with each aspect of the work.

You should ensure that those managing and supervising the work have the right blend of skills, knowledge, training and experience and that you have enough supervisors to cover for absences. The supervisor ought to be familiar with the type of work planned and you must ensure that your supervisors' training and experience are relevant and current.

You must ensure that operations are supervised enough to ensure that:

- all work is safe and complies with the site safety rules and agreed control measures
- work complies with relevant legislation and industry guidance
- all accidents, near misses and changes to agreed systems of work are reported.

Where the work involves high-risk activities, an appointed person must control that activity. If the supervisor has to leave site for any reason, you must arrange for another person to cover that role and inform everyone else of the change. This will include supervision of works and responsibility for management of the site.

### 2.3 Co-operate and communicate with the other duty holders

You have a key role to play in co-operating with the FWM and other contractors. Your work, or that of another contractor, could affect the health and safety of your workers and others, so to ensure that the risks are properly managed and controlled, you will need to co-operate with others.

All contractors (including supporting operations such as fuel deliveries and haulage, contractors nominated by the Landowner and the self-employed) have a part to play in ensuring that the site is a safe place to work. The key to this is proper co-ordination of the work, underpinned by good communication and co-operation between all those involved.

You have a responsibility to establish and maintain good lines of two-way communication between all parties both on and off site and for visitors on site. This is essential to facilitate monitoring of site safety by you and the FWM.

## 2.4 Consult with employees

Worksites where workers are involved in helping to make decisions about health and safety tend to be safer and healthier. Collaboration with your workers helps you to manage health and safety in a practical way by:

- helping you to spot workplace risks
- making sure health and safety controls are practical
- increasing the level of commitment to working in a safe and healthy way.

You need to consult all your employees, in good time, on health and safety matters. Consultation involves passing on information and providing explanations and also listening to each other and taking account of other views before making decisions that affect health and safety.

Issues you should consider consulting your employees about include:

- risks arising from their work
- risks arising from others' work or the environment they are working in
- proposals to manage and/or control these risks
- the best ways of providing information and training for them.

For further information on your legal duties refer to the HSE leaflet '*Consulting employees on health and safety: A brief guide to the law*' (INDG232), which can be downloaded from [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg232.htm)

## 2.5 Prepare site-specific risk assessments

It is the FWM's responsibility to give you relevant information about the worksite including any constraints from the Landowner and an Outline Risk Assessment that tells you about the hazards and risks of the site itself (and also the welfare arrangements to be agreed with you). You will need this information to do the site-specific risk assessments for your work. If such information is not provided then you are responsible for requesting it. The FWM can also go back to the Landowner for clarifications or more information for you.

To create your site-specific risk assessments, you should seek to involve the FWM and your workers and sub-contractors. Using the knowledge and experience of all who will be involved will result in better assessments: it will improve co-ordination and the risk controls will be realistic and understood by all.

A site-specific risk assessment must be developed as soon as is practical before starting the work. It should identify risk

controls for all the immediate issues, such as site- and task-related hazards, and also for the supporting works, such as fuel deliveries, offloading of equipment, creation of access tracks and manual handling of materials. It is a living document and should be reviewed if anything changes, or if the work has to pause for a period of time.

The risk assessment should be:

- proportionate to the size and nature of the work, and the risks involved
- thorough, well-considered and relevant to the work and the site
- workable and realistic
- sufficiently developed to allow work to start on site
- regularly reviewed and updated or expanded when circumstances change, such as additional operations or changes in site conditions
- shared with the workers and the FWM .

The FWM will need to confirm that you have created appropriate site-specific risk assessments before any work can start.

## 2.6 Provide for welfare facilities

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 place the legal responsibility on either or both the contractor (Regulation 4(1)) and the FWM (Regulation 4(2)) to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, suitable and sufficient welfare facilities for those at work. Under Regulation 3(4) the welfare provisions to be considered for forestry activities include toilets, washing facilities (clean, hot and cold or warm running water) and drinking water.

You should ensure that such facilities are provided by agreeing with the FWM who will take responsibility for each of them. Generally, this will be you or the FWM, or both of you. The agreed provider(s) should assess the welfare needs of those who will be working on site as part of the risk assessment process. The assessment should consider how many workers will need the facilities, and how long they will be needed for, to ensure the provision is sufficient. The assessment also needs to justify the chosen type of facility to ensure the provision is suitable and recorded this in the Outline Risk Assessment. See [FISA 806 Welfare Guide](#) for further guidance on assessing welfare provision.

The assessed 'suitable and sufficient' welfare facilities can be delivered in a variety of ways. They can, for example, be delivered directly by the FWM or the

contractor, hired in as a service from other contractors, through use of the Landowner's or a third-party's facilities nearby, or a mixture of several solutions.

For further information see the HSE's 'Approved Code of Practice and Guidance' for the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 at

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm>

### 2.7 Ensure site induction is provided

All workers must receive a site induction. The induction should be site-specific and cover the health and safety risks identified in the FWM's Outline Risk Assessment and in the relevant site-specific risk assessments, and the controls required. The detail provided in the induction should be relevant to the size and scope of the works and the level of risk involved.

The following induction topics should be considered:

- an outline of the work and the sequence
- management of the site, for example, who the manager is
- access and egress to the site and any work-time restrictions
- site-specific health and safety risks, for example, any requirement to work near overhead cables
- lone working rules
- control measures on site, for example, site safety rules, PPE, shared use of the site and restrictions on works
- dealing with emergencies, including first aid arrangements
- accident and incident reporting arrangements
- training details, for example, provision of toolbox talks and task briefings
- an individual worker's responsibility for health and safety.

In no circumstances should any worker commence work on the site without being in receipt of site information via an induction process. The FWM needs to manage and coordinate this process.

### 2.8 Appoint workers and sub-contractors

When you employ or control people doing work for you, you must make sure that:

- they have relevant and current skills, knowledge, training and experience to do the job safely and without putting their own or others' health and safety at risk

- they are properly supervised and are given clear instructions
- they have the right tools, equipment, plant, materials and protective clothing
- you talk with them (or their representatives) about health and safety issues
- you make arrangements for employees' occupational health where required, e.g. HAVS screening.

Additional information, instruction, training and supervision will be needed to support those who are still developing their experience in order to help them become self-sufficient in safe and healthy work practices.

You must select sub-contractors who are competent and have made adequate provision for health and safety. Any appointment of sub-contractors will be agreed with the FWM.

The best way to judge competence is to observe a worker or sub-contractor actually working and obtain copies of training records and prior relevant experience, e.g. in logbooks.

## 3. What information do you need?

As the Contractor, you should receive relevant information before you start work on site and updated information during the work.

You should expect from the **FWM**:

- details of unusual or significant risks and constraints on the timing or order of work
- specific risk controls and arrangements relating to the property
- details of preparation and lead-in time
- appropriate site rules and a suitable site induction
- details of health and safety conditions to be met by you or your workers
- arrangements for reporting unsafe behaviours or conditions
- the procedures to be followed in the event of serious and imminent danger
- details of the use of the agreed welfare facilities, as justified in the FWM's Outline Risk Assessment
- adequate safety management and planning for the contract.

You should expect from **Sub-contractors and Workers**:

- compliance with risk controls and site rules
- constructive feedback on site practice

- evidence of current training and experience relevant to the risks of the project
- the ability to stop work and report anything which might endanger themselves or others.

#### 4. What information must you provide?

You should provide relevant information before your time on the project and updated information during the project.

You must provide your **Employees** and/or **Sub-contractors** with:

- access to the risk assessments
- site rules
- information about the work, including the nature of the work, the location and duration of the work
- access to the welfare facilities.

You must provide the **FWM** with:

- your site-specific risk assessments and any input to the FWM's Outline Risk Assessment
- evidence of relevant insurances
- copies of relevant competencies and training
- copies of site records, where requested.

#### 5. What could it look like in practice?

As the contractor you must carry out defined duties to fulfil your role. Here are some suggestions for ways to do this adequately.

##### 5.1 Before you start on site

Manage the risks to the safety or health of your workers and others nearby who could be affected by your work.

You can do this in several ways.

- If you will be the only contractor on the project, check that the Landowner/FWM is aware of their duties and whether they have any particular site rules or standards
- Visit the site, check the access arrangements and consider the safest methods for your workers to carry out the work
- Find out whether other work will take place at the same time as yours and agree how any interfaces with other contractors will be managed
- Find out what hazards there are on the site and whether they are within the work area or along any access route

- Think about how long it will take you to organise your workers and any plant and materials they will need, so you can estimate when you will be ready to start
- Check your proposed workers' skills, knowledge, training and experience and arrange any retraining or refresher training where necessary
- Assess the degree of information, instruction and supervision required, taking into account the nature of the work and the training, experience and likely behaviour of your workers
- Make arrangements to provide adequate supervision by those with appropriate training, experience and leadership qualities for the risks which the project is likely to involve
- Check what welfare facilities are available, in case you need to organise anything else
- Check what first aid provision will be required for the work you are undertaking, the workers you are using and the location in which you are working. Make different arrangements for remote or difficult to access locations
- Consider the implications if any of your workers have known health issues
- Communicate the method of work that the workers need to follow, particularly if the control measures are unusual or not obvious. Focus on the work activities where there is most risk of injury or ill health
- You may need to share your method of work with other contractors so they can take it into account when planning and organising their work. One way of doing this is to record it in a risk assessment and method statement
- Arrange for your workers, plant and materials to arrive on site at the allocated time.

##### 5.2 While working on site

Manage the risks to the safety and health of your workers and others who could be affected by your work. You can do this in several ways.

- Set a personal example by challenging any unsafe behaviour or practice and not ignoring it, and by always wearing the necessary PPE
- Ensure you and your workers receive site induction. It is your responsibility to carry out the site induction
- Provide instructions to your workers on what needs to be done and, importantly, how you intend the

work to be done, in which order and with what equipment, especially when it involves machinery

- Ensure anyone in a supervisory role has the necessary skills, technical knowledge, training, experience and leadership qualities for the work
- Brief your workers on what is expected of them and consider any suggestions from them on better ways of working
- Ensure your workers know what to do in the event of any likely emergency
- Ensure your workers are complying with the site rules and working in accordance with how you intend the work to be done
- Liaise with the Landowner/FWM and keep them informed of any changes to your planned working method in case it has an impact on other plans
- Liaise with other contractors and the Landowner/FWM and co-operate with reasonable suggestions for reducing risks to health and safety on the site. These suggestions could arise as a result of engaging with the workers
- Check your plant and equipment and, when necessary, maintain, repair or replace it following manufacturer's guidelines.

## Annex A: Forestry work roles summarised

Role	Definition	Examples of who may take on this role	Summary of duties and responsibilities
<b>Landowner</b>	Person or Organisation in control of the land on which forestry work takes place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estate owners or farmers.</li> <li>• State forest organisations or other public bodies, such as the Crown Estate and local authorities.</li> <li>• Forestry management companies.</li> <li>• Land agents working on behalf of private and public owners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate the activities of the overall forest environment for health and safety purposes.</li> <li>• Gather information about hazards on and around forestry worksites and communicate these to the FWM.</li> <li>• Ensure that the work on a particular site does not affect the health and safety of other people.</li> <li>• Take advice from a competent specialist or agent on any aspect where they are not sufficiently knowledgeable.</li> </ul>
<b>Forestry Works Manager (FWM)</b>	Person or Organisation who commissions the work on a forestry site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone in the Landowner role directly engaging forestry contractors as part of their business.</li> <li>• Anyone engaged by the Landowner to manage and carry out the forestry operation on their behalf.</li> <li>• Forestry management company directly engaging contractors to work on their client's land.</li> <li>• Land agent company directly engaging contractors to work on their client's land.</li> <li>• Timber purchasers (merchants, processors or contractors).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use information from the Landowner to prepare an outline risk assessment for work on the site and for haulage of timber away from site (where applicable).</li> <li>• Select competent contractors who make adequate provision for health and safety.</li> <li>• Specify health and safety measures for contractors working on the site and anyone else who may be affected by the work activity.</li> <li>• Liaise with the Landowner.</li> <li>• Supervise health and safety on site.</li> <li>• Make arrangements for the reporting of incidents, unsafe practices or dangerous occurrences.</li> </ul>
<b>Contractor</b>	Provider of a forestry service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracting companies with their own employees or who take on Sub-contractors.</li> <li>• Owner-operators.</li> <li>• Hauliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the FWM to ensure health and safety standards are met.</li> <li>• Select sub-contractors who are skilled and experienced, competent and have made adequate provision for health and safety.</li> <li>• Manage employees and sub-contractors and ensure they work safely.</li> <li>• Ensure effective supervision is in place so that safe systems of work are maintained if the owner/controller of the contractor's business is absent.</li> <li>• Report any unsafe practices or occurrences.</li> </ul>
<b>Sub-contractor</b>	Anyone engaged by a contractor other than by direct employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone working under contract to a contractor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operate with the arrangements for health and safety on the site.</li> <li>• Manage personal health and safety.</li> <li>• Report any unsafe practices or occurrences.</li> <li>• Carry out site-specific risk assessments.</li> <li>• Provide adequate supervision of their employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Worker</b>	Anyone working in the forestry industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone working within the forestry industry or undertaking a related task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take care of their own health and safety and that of people who may be affected by what they do (or do not do).</li> <li>• Co-operate with others on health and safety, and do not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for their health, safety or welfare.</li> <li>• Follow the training they have received when using any work items their employer has given them.</li> <li>• Report any injuries, unsafe practices or occurrence to the contractor or their employer.</li> </ul>

## Further information

This guide is one of a series produced by the Forestry Industry Safety Accord (FISA). Copies of this guide are available as electronic or hard copy via the UKFISA website shown below. There is also a wide range of additional safety information in relation to forestry on the FISA website, and in relation to arboriculture on the Arboricultural Association (AA) website.

For more general information about health and safety related to tree work, please visit the Health and Safety Executive website: [www.hse.gov.uk/treework/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/index.htm)

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