



Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry

Industry Guidance for Forestry Works Manager (FWM)

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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.

Effective and timely planning, risk assessment and supervision are essential to ensure safe 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 the FWM?

Of all of the roles associated with this guidance, the FWM is the most important Duty Holder.

The FWM is the person or organisation who commissions the work on a forestry site. They can be a sole trader, forestry agent, timber buyer or contractor. They are typically an employee of an organisation who contracts, directs and instructs the work, including any haulage operations. They can at times also be the Landowner, for example when a Landowner directly engages contractors to carry out the forestry operation.

1.3 What is the FWM's role?

As FWM you are responsible for:

- ensuring all risks are planned for and effective controls are in place to reduce them or remove them from the work
- commissioning competent contractors and/or hauliers

- supervision of the health, safety and environmental standards on the worksite and/or haulage operations.

You are the 'go to' person with respect to any decision making that may affect the health and safety of contractors, their employees and members of the public who may be affected by work taking place on the site. You provide the management link between the Landowner and those commissioned to work the site, and you are critical in developing a 'safety-first' culture in the delivery of forestry operations.

A summary of all the main forestry work roles can be found in Annex A. Throughout this guide there are a number of lists of tasks an FWM should undertake and issues they should consider. These lists are for your guidance and they are not exhaustive. As FWM, you must still consider carefully what might be required in each specific work situation to deliver safe forestry operations.

1.4 What a good FWM looks like

As the FWM, the function of planning and implementing the required standards of safety, health and welfare lies with you. As an organisation or individual, you are required to co-ordinate this process and its outputs, ensuring that they are suitable and sufficient to control the risks arising from the activities undertaken on the site.

To achieve this, you need to have a suitable combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge which matches the risks that will foreseeably arise. You need the ability to lead and challenge all those involved in the work, whether they are landowner, contractors or individual workers. You will also need to know your limitations and recognise when it is necessary to acquire competent assistance from outside your organisation.

Effective leadership from you as FWM is key and will help to determine how safe your site is and the number of accidents, incidents and ill-health cases that arise. The absence of good leadership is often at the root of unsafe work practices.

Good leadership involves, amongst other things:

- visible, active commitment to the health, safety and welfare of those undertaking forestry operations
- effective communication arrangements that also ensure competent advice from whatever source is listened to and acted on
- effective management structures that integrate with all duty holders involved in the site

- the integration of good health and safety management with business decisions
- contractor and worker involvement
- challenging unsafe or poor practices
- monitoring, reporting and reviewing performance.

2. What do you have to do?

2.1 Engage with the contractor before work starts on site

The site information provided to you by the Landowner has a fundamental bearing on the operational delivery of the site, which in turn is fundamental to the health, safety and wellbeing of the contractors/sub-contractors commissioned by you to work on the site.

Before work starts you should hold a Pre-Commencement Meeting with your contractor (and include the Landowner and the contractor's workers and/or chainsaw cutters if needs be) to 'walk through' your Outline Risk Assessment and discuss how the planned working methods and risk controls will actually work on that particular site. This gives those involved another chance to review, together, the information about the site, to see the hazards, to check the work plans, access and welfare arrangements and, critically, to agree changes before anything starts.

It is essential that high-risk activities (such as chainsaw work) are at the centre of site planning to avoid causing unintended difficulties, additional hazards or unsafe conditions for those high-risk activities at a later stage. If neither you nor the contractor is competent to perform a specialist aspect of the work, and you cannot get those workers to site in advance to help with your planning, get early advice from another competent person instead.

What should be done ahead of the Pre-commencement meeting:

- check with the Landowner that all of their requirements and the known hazards have been identified
- decide if the information received is suitable and sufficient to allow the work to proceed safely
- check that the people you have engaged to carry out the work are suitably competent to manage the site-specific risks effectively
- check there are appropriate resources, including time, available to carry out the works safely
- work with, and seek advice from, your contractors and other stakeholders such as Electricity Network

Operators to develop your work plans, risk assessments and safe systems of work

- advise the Landowner if their requirements need to be adapted to accommodate safe systems of work for the worksite
- agree a final operational plan for the site with the Landowner that takes full account of the hazards and risks identified.

2.2 Manage and mitigate risks (pre-work on site)

Outline Risk Assessment using information from the Landowner along with your knowledge and experience to ensure that your contractor and their sub-contractors are aware of the hazards on the site and how the risks are to be managed.

As FWM you should:

- assess the hazards and risks through the risk assessment process (risk – severity – control)
- identify the high-risk aspects of the work, e.g. use of chainsaws, and try to eliminate or significantly reduce these where possible
- consider whether early work will compromise the safety of later work and plan to avoid that scenario (for example, will harvester produce or log stacks be in the way of chainsaw users?)
- include welfare considerations for workers in your assessment and justify the agreed arrangements
- ensure that all risk controls are costed and built into the operational plan
- plan for the whole job and challenge assumptions that may create risk (such as the 'we'll deal with that later' approach)
- manage the expectations of the Landowner and others in relation to controlling and managing risks
- where special biosecurity management is required for a particular site, plan how and where workers will wash themselves, clothing and equipment as necessary.

2.3 Plan and manage your work

As FWM you must have enough resources available to you to properly fulfil your role. You will need to plan and manage your time effectively to do everything you need to do well. If you decide to delegate any aspect of your role to others, your instructions have to be clear, so check they understand what you are asking them to do.

To plan for health and safety you will:

- set aside enough time and resources to plan the work in full and from end to end
- get familiar with the worksite and make contingency plans if changes to work conditions change the risks involved
- ensure those carrying out your work are competent, i.e. they have the right skills, certificates, 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
- ensure adequate supervision of the work on site and have systems and methods in place to monitor (see section 2.10: 'health, safety and environmental standards on site')
- have an emergency response system in place
- agree with the contractor how information will be exchanged to allow both of you, and other contractors, to manage health and safety
- agree and record with the contractor any delegated areas of responsibility for the site
- plan how the work might affect others who are likely to come into contact with work or with the worksite, e.g. members of the public.
- report any safety issues/accidents to the appropriate bodies/parties
- ensure that sufficient time and resources are available to you to manage the operation from beginning to end
- have in place processes for checking first aid kit replenishment and the safety and security of chemicals and fuels etc.
- have in place an emergency plan for the site including emergency contact details, access to and egress from the worksite and worksite grid references
- ensure emergency situations have been planned for and that operators are trained and competent to deal with them
- ensure that risks to members of the public are managed effectively through safe working methods.

To manage health and safety risks you will:

- pass on relevant information and instructions to the contractor. This should be done by briefing the contractor on the operational plan, risk assessment and, for higher-risk tasks, agreeing a method statement with the contractor which outlines the planned method, sequence and control measures
- ensure that there is an induction process in place for new operatives who did not attend the initial pre-commencement meeting/site induction
- ensure that any information which changes the method of work on the site is discussed with all involved in the work
- provide management advice and support to the contractor when it is sought
- ensure all risk assessments and associated documentation are managed, discussed and kept relevant throughout operational delivery
- hold toolbox talks to discuss safety issues on site, involving the Landowner when necessary
- Do your contractors have the 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?
- Do your contractors have sufficient resources to carry out the work safely?
- Can you assure to the Landowner that operator and machinery competencies/certification match the required work?
- Is all competency and machinery certification relevant and up to date?
- Are systems in place to manage competency certification (validity, refresher training etc.)?
- Are systems in place to manage lone working?
- Do operators have the right tools, equipment, plant, materials and protective clothing (incorporating maintenance schedules where appropriate)?
- Do operators have spill kits to deal with escapes of chemicals, fuels and oils?

2.4 Appoint competent contractors

The FWM has the principal responsibility to commission people who will deliver the range of works associated with the operational site. This means you need to ensure that every individual is competent to perform their element of the work required.

When you employ or control people doing work for you, you should consider:

- Are you fulfilling your responsibilities in relation to health and wellbeing such as, for example, lone working, HAVs, WBV and exposure to noise, pesticides and tick-borne diseases?
- Are adequate welfare facilities provided for those on site through the agreement of whoever is responsible (either the FWM and/or the contractor)? See section 2.9 for legal responsibilities.

2.5 Co-operate and communicate with others

As FWM, you are the manager of the site and all communications that may affect the overall health and safety and wellbeing of individuals on the site must come through you, so make sure you ask others to keep you informed.

You have a key role in co-operating with the Landowner and co-ordinating the activities of your employees and contractors with any other work or activities that may be taking place nearby. This needs considerable diligence from you so that nothing is overlooked, and at all times a 'safety-first' attitude should prevail. You may need to look beyond the immediate land-holding too and co-ordinate with other FWMs working nearby, for example over the use of small access roads, or the provisions of Local Authority haulage plans.

The Landowner and your contractors all have a part to play in ensuring that the site is safe to work, but you have the overall responsibility for ensuring that it actually happens.

2.6 Build a safety-first culture into operational plans

The Landowner must give you information about the hazards, risks and constraints associated with the site (see section 2.1: 'Engage with the Landowner before work starts on site'). This may be map-based or written information. Maps are a most effective way to communicate locations and site information to contractors and their workers.

To reinforce a safety-first culture, FWMs must create an emergency plan for the site which incorporates the following health and safety information (see *FISA 802 Emergency Planning*):

- location and emergency grid reference numbers
- emergency contact details
- welfare facility location and first aid point
- hazardous substances secure point (chemicals, fuels, oils, etc.)
- management of third-party access and egress.

The above information contained in a plan or a cab-card can make all the difference in the event of an incident or emergency, and it can be discussed and confirmed at the Pre-Commencement Meeting.

2.7 Manage the risk assessment process

As FWM, you are required to initiate and oversee the risk assessment process. You should use the information the Landowner has given you about site hazards, along with your own knowledge and experience of the work, to develop your Outline Risk Assessment. You will pass this assessment to the contractor(s) who will rely on it to inform their site-specific risk assessments for the work they will undertake. As FWM you should work with the contractor(s) on this and seek to bring in the expertise and knowledge of workers and chainsaw and/or machine operators as necessary, to agree how the various hazards and risks are to be managed. This should not be an onerous task, but it is a critical one.

An inclusive risk assessment approach like this will make it a site-specific exercise and the resulting control measures that you all identify will be realistic, agreed and deliverable.

A risk assessment helps to establish:

- the opportunities to avoid high-risk operations such as chainsaw work by using other methods or modifying the work
- the planning, management and supervision that will be required for any necessary high-risk operations
- the appropriate equipment and machinery suitable for the terrain and the work – for example, use of a harvester, forwarder or cable crane
- the separation of work on the site to accommodate risk zones
- the levels of skill, experience, training and competences needed to work the site safely
- the physical control measures and safe working practices to protect the health and safety of those working on the site or those who may be affected by the work such as hauliers, third parties, members of the public etc.
- how the site can be left in a suitably safe condition when work is completed.

2.8 Co-ordinate and attend site induction meetings

Worksites and operators will change, sometimes unexpectedly, and this change needs to be managed. As FWM you should know who is on your worksite at all

times and what their role is. This is a fundamental health and wellbeing component of safety management.

After the work has started, any new worker/operator needs to be inducted to the site. You should:

- have arrangements that alert everyone on site to worker/operator changes
- have arrangements to provide new workers with all of the site information (risk assessments, operational plan etc.) before they start work and ensure they understand it
- arrange for the operator to be inducted to the site by you or a delegated person before they start work
- ensure that arrangements for other visitors to site (service providers, deliveries etc.) are in place.

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.

2.9 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.

As FWM you must ensure that such facilities are provided by agreeing who will take responsibility for each of them. Generally, this will be you or the contractor, or both of you. The FWM should assess the welfare needs of those who will be working on site as part of their Outline Risk Assessment. That 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 to record 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 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm

2.10 Monitor health, safety and environmental standards on site

As FWM, you are required to supervise health, safety and environmental standards whilst work takes place and the Landowner will want to check that you are doing this.

You are the main point of contact for the Landowner, your contractor and, if necessary, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). Supervision is required whenever work takes place (including haulage or site clear-up operations). Frequency of supervision should be proportional to the worksite levels of complexity, hazard and risk. You may delegate some part of the day-to-day supervision, but an appropriate level of supervision by you as the FWM is essential.

If you do not supervise health and safety on the site, all the planning for safe working may be of little value. Supervision involves taking a critical look at what is happening across the whole site and taking immediate action to address any lapse in health and safety standards.

As FWM, you have the following management responsibilities:

- supervise the work to ensure contractors are working safely, following risk assessments and using the agreed methods of work
- ensure there are arrangements to record site visits (deliveries etc.) and act on any issues that compromise health, safety and environmental standards on site
- review risk assessments alongside the actual work and respond effectively to any new or unexpected risks
- discuss changes to the risk assessment with those working on the site in order to implement any new controls to manage the risks
- hold regular toolbox talks to check progress, maintenance and the achievement of standards
- update the Landowner on any issues that may require a change to the original plan of work
- where high-risk operations have been identified, e.g. chainsaw work, ensure controls identified in the site-specific risk assessment are being implemented. Chainsaw work should already have been identified in the Outline Risk Assessment.

- ensure anyone in a supervisory role has the necessary skills, technical knowledge, training, experience and leadership qualities for the work
- be mindful of the impact of your contractors' work on later stages of the job, e.g. haulage activities
- ensure that suitable welfare provision is in place.

When visiting the site:

- lead by example: make sure site rules are followed
- be proactive in your approach: speak to contractors about the safe working practices, their implementation and practicability
- when presented with challenges, be seen to act upon them
- do not wait to be told to act by the Landowner: act on your own observations, or involve the Landowner if their input is required.

Demonstrating the above behaviours is essential to ensuring a safety-first culture on site.

2.11 Manage third-party access

As FWM you are required to manage and conduct operations in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no individuals are exposed to any risks to their health and safety. Safety signage is an essential aspect of this, and as FWM you should have robust systems to adequately sign the worksite (and to maintain the signs) to warn approaching people of danger and any restrictions to access (or diversions). The industry guidance for worksite signage is in the publication at this link www.ukfisa.com/safety-information/safety-library/site-safety/managing-public-safety-on-harvesting-sites1.html

You are responsible for third-party access to the worksite (or shared access routes) as part of the job, such as haulage, plant deliveries and water deliveries to spraying operations. You must also make arrangements for managing formal recreation, e.g. waymarked walks, cycle routes etc., where they will be affected by your work. However, there are also a number of other access arrangements that will need to be managed, including:

- fuel deliveries to the contractors' plant
- designating safe areas for repair, maintenance and servicing of machines
- informal recreational access
- wildlife control and monitoring

- general access for business activities, e.g. post and household deliveries, power companies, wildlife management.

You will need to have arrangements in place to manage the known constraints and hazards identified by the Landowner, but they need to be robust enough to help manage and respond to unexpected situations too. Third-party access can be managed by a worker on site who has the knowledge and delegated authority to co-ordinate the work with any planned and unplanned access needs.

3. What information do you need?

Section 2 is all about your specific responsibilities and how you deliver on them. You will have received and acted on relevant information from the Landowner and your contractor in order to inform the risk assessment process. However, you will need to consider other information to support your assessments and decisions too, for example:

- industry best practice guides and codes of practice (e.g. UKFS forest and water guidelines/EA/SEPA)
- HSE guidance and publications (e.g. *GS6 – 'Avoiding Danger from Overhead Powerlines'*)
- FISA Safety Guides
- legislation (Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA), Welfare regulations etc.)
- training courses (in-house developed, electrical awareness training etc.)
- shared learning both from within the industry and with other industry partners
- research documents (Forest Research and industry publications)
- professional colleagues and industry leads, e.g. asking a skilled chainsaw operator for input to site planning and site-specific risk assessments.

Using industry-wide information will help you develop your knowledge to plan and manage forestry works with high standards of safety, environmental protection and welfare built in.

4. What information must you provide?

As FWM, you must provide relevant information before work starts and during your time on the worksite. When new risks emerge, the risk assessments and other documentation have to be updated to reflect the risks and any new controls. These changed documents must

be passed to the Landowner and your contractors without delay.

You must provide the **Landowner** with:

- risk assessments
- evidence of relevant insurances
- copies of relevant competencies and training
- copies of site records, where requested
- compliance with site rules and risk controls
- constructive feedback on site practice
- notification of any safety incidents/accidents
- information about material changes to the site arrangements for safety or practical reasons.

You must provide **Contractors/Sub-contractors** with:

- your Outline Risk Assessment
- site safety rules
- operational plans
- maps (hazards and constraints, emergency access points etc.)
- information about the work, including the nature of the work, its location and duration
- method statements (if required).

- All contractors and workers are competent and hold the relevant certification/qualifications
- All contractors are being supervised and they have, and understand, the most up-to-date information
- All supervisors are competent to carry out their responsibilities and act on any problems
- Welfare and healthcare provisions have been considered and assessed
- First aid provision and emergency procedures are understood by all
- Third-party access is being effectively managed.

5. What could it look like in practice?

The previous sections of this guide describe the different components of what goes into good practice for health, safety, wellbeing and environmental protection in forestry work. The FWM role (supported by the contractor and others) is responsible for bringing all those components together, tailored as required for each site, to deliver an effective operation that also meets a 'safety-first' objective.

What could it look like in practice?

- From Landowner to Sub-contractor and Worker, everyone is aware of their roles and associated responsibilities
- High-risk operations have been identified and are being managed accordingly
- All work is being carried out using safe working methods and with due regard to the environment.
- All hazards and constraints are identified, and all risks are managed
- All aspects of the work interface well with each other and are properly sequenced
- All operations are adequately resourced and timed

Annex A: Forestry work roles summarised

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

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

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