



# Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FISA gratefully acknowledges the contributions and efforts of all those involved in the revision of the forestry industry's 'Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry'. Without the resources and input from FISA Members, working group volunteers, industry practitioners, health and safety specialists, and invaluable guidance and support from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) colleagues, such developments could not be achieved.

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## INTRODUCTION

### The Accord

The UK Forest Industry:

- Believes that all fatalities and injuries are preventable
- Supports development of a new safety culture where the health, safety and welfare of all those working in the forest industry are fundamental priorities
- Believes that through strong and committed leadership we can work collaboratively to significantly improve the health and safety performance of our industry

We are committed to achieving this through:

- The creation of a dedicated Safety Group to provide the necessary strategic direction and impetus to raise health, safety and welfare standards throughout the industry
- Providing clear and proactive leadership to change attitudes and behaviour at every level in the industry
- Involving everybody working in the industry to ensure individual and collective responsibility for health and safety, avoiding unacceptable risks and challenging unsafe practices
- Developing a mechanism for the industry to share safety statistics, data and information
- Maintaining and improving through training the competency of those working in the industry at every level
- Recognising that improvements to the industry's health and safety performance require sustained commitment and action – being equitable and fair to all those involved.

### The Organisation

In 2012 representatives from many of the leading industry organisations joined together to form a steering group. Together we have developed the Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) which sets out the commitment that each organisation, and the sector at large, can make to raise the standard of health and safety in their place of work. The organisational structure comprises:

#### Members

Members are signatories to the Accord and have access to all information provided by the Accord. Members provide ideas and feedback to initiatives and strategy output. Critically, members commit to the delivery and implementation of the Accord.

#### The steering group

A group of up to 28 company CEOs and directors, including large contracting businesses and trade associations, provides a strategic steer, resources and direction. The steering group works with the working groups to deliver objectives and meets four times a year.

#### Working groups

These groups comprise practitioners and safety experts plus other members working in task-specific groups to provide ideas, solutions, innovation and delivery. They provide recommendations to the steering group.

### A vision for a safe industry

FISA is seeking to improve safety in forestry through:

- Developing an understanding among forestry investors, forest owners and their agents of the hazards of forestry and the costs associated with realising the value of their investment safely
- Ensuring that people at all levels, whatever their role, have the necessary training, skills, experience and personal attributes to properly manage the significant risks associated with forestry operations
- Ensuring that sufficient time is taken for effective planning of all forestry work from inception to completion, in order that safety is not compromised
- Ensuring that workers undertaking higher-risk activities (such as using chainsaws) are competent and well supported, and that the planning of such work accommodates enough time and resource for the work to be done safely
- Challenging unsafe behaviour through effective monitoring and supervision at all levels.

### Managing health and safety in forestry

The 'Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry' was first launched in 1999, revised in 2003 and 2014, and has been updated and revised again in 2019. This latest version is published as a suite of documents, each aimed at one of the key roles in the planning and delivery of forestry work, including, for the first time, the role of forestry workers. The new documents set out the legal duties, responsibilities and nature of each of the roles with the aim of making those duties and responsibilities more straightforward and understandable. Although everyone involved in forestry work has health and safety duties and/or responsibilities, the primary responsibility for ensuring the effective planning of work and management of risks in forestry rests with the

Forestry Works Manager (FWM). The guidance aims to help everyone involved in forestry work, from the landowner to the FWM to contractors and forestry workers, to meet their duties and responsibilities under the health and safety legislation. This includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Provision and Use Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and other regulations such as Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. FISA is committed to reviewing these guidance documents regularly and welcomes constructive feedback.

Forestry work generally takes place in difficult and complicated outdoor environments amongst significant hazards and constraints. It is a high-risk industry and the planning, management and co-ordination required for forest operations are necessarily complex. Responsibility for safety in this complex working environment extends from workers on the ground right through to the chief executives of management companies and forestry organisations, and to the landowners too. FISA recognises that improvements to safety culture and associated behaviours, including a readiness to learn from mistakes, are essential to achieving its vision, and this requires leadership at all levels across the industry. Planning and carrying out commercial forestry operations involves a number of tasks and processes that have to be managed to ensure health and safety is built into every activity, for example:

- selecting suitable equipment
- completing risk assessments
- communicating effectively
- protecting the health and safety of the public
- establishing safe working practices
- ensuring appropriate training and competence for all involved
- selecting skilled and experienced contractors who are competent
- supervising the work effectively.

The successful management of health and safety in forestry (and supporting work such as haulage, services on site or fuel supply) requires co-ordination of activities and communication of information. To help information flow and ensure the right tasks are carried out by the right people, the new suite of 'Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry' documents identifies the five forestry 'roles' that have various legal duties and other responsibilities for health and safety

## Understanding your role

It is important that you and everyone else involved understands which role(s) you have to fulfil in each situation. The table at the end of this document defines each of the five roles identified by the forestry industry to fulfil the duties required by the law and to manage health and safety in forestry work. The table suggests who might normally fulfil each role and what the main duties and responsibilities of each role are. It is possible that an individual or an organisation may hold multiple roles at once, so it is useful to agree and record exactly where responsibility for each role will sit.

Remember that any role may be performed by an organisation (such as a forestry business) even though it will generally assign an employee or another person to perform the functions of the role on its behalf. While it is clearly possible to delegate the functions of a particular role to an individual, it is not possible to delegate the legal responsibilities that go with that role.

Some roles, for example the FWM role or the contractor role, have significantly more responsibilities to do than others. However, they all have an interdependence that requires discussion and co-operation. Acknowledging that the others involved in a forestry operation must meet their duties and responsibilities too will help you understand how your role supports them to carry out theirs.

Table 1 – 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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