



Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry

Industry Guidance for Landowners

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1. Introduction

As Landowner you have duties under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for what happens on your land. This guide provides advice on the actions that you can take in order to fulfil these duties in relation to forestry operations.

The Landowner role includes the following key tasks.

- Co-ordinate activities on the overall landholding for health and safety purposes.
- Gather information about hazards on and around forestry worksites (and any environmental sensitivities) and communicate them to the Forestry Works Manager (FWM).
- Ensure the work on a particular site does not affect the health and safety of other people. This includes making sure the person or organisation with overall control of the forestry operation, the FWM, is competent in terms of health and safety.
- You and the FWM must co-operate to ensure the forestry work and access arrangements are co-ordinated with any other activities taking place on or around the land.

If you are in doubt about your own knowledge or ability to do this, it is in your interests to appoint a competent agent to act for you, or to secure other expert assistance. A summary of all forestry work roles is in **Annex A**.

1.1 General introduction

This guide is based on sound industry practice. It can be applied to all forestry operations and will particularly assist small estates, businesses and organisations to plan and conduct forestry work in ways that will meet health and safety responsibilities and help avoid injury and ill health.

To ensure responsibilities are clear and the work is organised effectively so that the various requirements of health and safety law can be met by the various people involved, there are five 'roles' in every forestry operation defined by the forestry industry. Each role has responsibilities (some of which are legal duties) that must be fulfilled. Depending on how the work is commissioned and organised, an individual may hold more than one of the defined roles and so must fulfil all the responsibilities for each role they hold.

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 Landowner?

The Landowner is the person, group, business or organisation that is in control of the land on which the forestry work takes place. They may not own the land but can decide what happens on the land either directly or by a delegated authority. In the context of this guidance, this role includes an agent who is acting on your behalf.

1.3 Where does an agent fit in?

An agent is a competent person authorised to act for you in a particular capacity.

If you appoint one then it is your responsibility to ensure that your agent is competent in the particular circumstances for which you engage them – for example, managing forestry works to fulfil your legal duties and responsibilities, to the standards and requirements outlined in this and other FISA guidance. The competence of an agent should not be assumed; it should be assessed using evidence of knowledge, skills and relevant experience in much the same way as for a Forestry Works Manager (FWM), outlined in section 2.1 below.

2. What do you have to do?

Although the FWM is the key role in managing the health and safety of a forestry operation, the Landowner also has important responsibilities.

2.1 Get a competent FWM

Should you engage a contractor directly you are taking on the role of FWM, and if you are not competent or resourced to do all that this entails you should engage a competent person to do it for you. If your contractor offers to step up and fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the FWM as well, you must check that they are competent to do so.

When appointing an FWM yourself, you must check that the FWM is competent to plan and implement the work so that it will be carried out safely and will not affect the health and safety of others (see below). This check should be done prior to the work being planned in detail.

Generally, though, if you are employing the services of a forestry business such as a timber purchaser, a forestry agent or management company, they will take on the role of FWM and assign an experienced employee or other competent person to do what is required. In these cases, the competence requirement normally relates to the business supplying the FWM rather than just the assigned individual, but even so, that individual must still be able to meet the FWM's responsibilities. This requirement includes whether they have the right support and resources available to them, including time, equipment and insurance.

'Competence' is determined as an appropriate mix of resources, including qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience. The FWM should be able to demonstrate, for example:

Knowledge

- Health and safety qualifications (e.g. NEBOSH) or access to competent health and safety advice.
- Qualifications in forestry.
- Chartered status.

Skills

- Appropriate training, e.g. IOSH Managing Safely, FISA FWM training.
- Technical training in forestry work and contract management.
- Effective procedures for selecting and managing competent contractors.

Experience

- Verifiable references.
- Examples of managing and performing similar types of work over time.

HSE publication *INDG368 'Using Contractors: A brief guide'* gives good advice on how to check for competence. (ISBN: 9780717664672).

2.2 Provide information to the FWM

The FWM will need information from you in order to fulfil their responsibilities (see the FWM Duty Holder Role in Annex A). You have a duty to provide this information, and operational planning and resource allocation cannot

start until you have done so. Much of this information is safety critical and should be included at the earliest opportunity, and wherever possible in any sales and tender particulars.

As Landowner, you must tell the FWM about the following:

- **The location and nature of any hazards on your land. For example:**
 - shared access routes (postman/deliveries/neighbours etc.)
 - public roads, rights of way, boundaries and access points
 - environmental designations, wildlife or constraints
 - overhead powerlines and underground services (e.g. line height measurements, ground markers)
 - civil engineering factors (such as culvert and bridge strengths)
 - hidden structures or groundworks
 - steep ground cliffs and broken ground
 - water features
 - windblown trees
 - livestock

If you are unaware of the hazards that may affect forestry, you must co-operate with the FWM to identify them.

- **Any measures you have already put in place to reduce the risk of the hazards (such as local consultation, barriers or signs).**
- **Other activities on the land that may affect, or be affected, by the forestry operation. For example:**
 - deliveries
 - agricultural operations
 - shooting or stalking days
- **The constraints that will apply to the work. For example:**
 - access and egress times
 - diversions to allow planning and management of public access
 - days when work cannot take place
 - places and routes that may not be used

You should try to avoid placing constraints on forestry operations which increase the risks to those undertaking the forestry work, such as restricting the use of forestry roads rather than agreeing how they could be used. Loading operations, for instance, will always need to use routes that have adequate width and stacking spaces as well as acceptable slopes and places where haulage vehicles can turn and strap the load safely.

The FWM may ask you to attend a Pre-Commencement Meeting which is when the FWM's plan for the work is discussed with the contractor before any work starts. This gives everyone involved a chance to see the worksite, confirm that the hazards, issues and logistics have been addressed and at this meeting the working methods and risk controls are agreed.

2.3 Co-ordinate activities

You and the FWM must ensure that different activities on your land do not conflict or get in each other's way to the detriment of health and safety. You and the FWM should liaise with the others involved to communicate your plans and co-ordinate your activities.

You and the FWM should consider:

- What else will be happening in the forest at the time the operations are scheduled?
- Can the work be timed to avoid public access peaks?
- What effect does the timing have on the ground conditions that contractors will have to deal with; for example, what are the seasonal implications?
- How will machines and timber be moved on and off the site, and how does that fit in with other vehicle movements in the forest?
- How will this work affect the health and safety of people working in or visiting the forest?
- Who else do you need to liaise with in relation to the forest operations, for example, individuals or communities affected by timber transport, or are there any Local Authority 'Timber Haulage Plan' restrictions?

Your FWM, along with the contractor, is legally required to ensure that welfare facilities are provided for the workers. This provision will be based on their assessment of how many workers will need the facilities and for how long, to ensure the provision is suitable and sufficient. The FWM will want to discuss with you where the facilities may be best placed and how they will be secured and serviced while on your land. Once you are aware of who else may be accessing the worksite at other times, you can meet your co-ordinating duty in this respect too. See [FISA Guide 806](#) for further guidance on welfare provision for forestry work sites.

2.4 Control changes

Landowners should ensure that arrangements agreed to ensure the safety of those working in and using the forest are put in place and maintained for the duration of the forestry work.

Unexpected changes can introduce new risks. Be alert for changes to other activities on your land that may affect the forestry work or the access routes. If anything changes or is likely to change, inform the FWM without delay so that they can plan and act to manage risks effectively.

Changes to the forestry work plans are the FWM's responsibility. If the FWM needs to make changes due to weather or other circumstances, they should liaise with you in case the changes might affect your other activities. You must then work together to co-ordinate and implement any new safety measures.

2.5 Monitor standards

As Landowner you are not expected to directly supervise the work as this is the FWM's role. However, you should keep in regular contact with the FWM to ensure communication is working effectively.

It is also good practice to periodically monitor that the safe working practices proposed by the FWM are being delivered on site. This is particularly important for procedures that have been put in place to protect members of the public.

If anything is not as expected, contact the FWM and ask them to resolve and/or explain it. **If anything appears to you to be unsafe or unacceptable you should consider pausing the work immediately until it is explained and/or corrected by the FWM.**

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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