



## Introduction

This leaflet covers the legal requirements for training and certification within the forestry and arboriculture industries, including the responsibilities of managers, supervisors and operators. It also gives guidance on access to the provision of adequate training and what certification is appropriate for health and safety purposes.

Forestry and arboriculture work involves many high-risk activities and skills. Workers are often required to operate in remote areas with difficult terrain and in all weathers. Training is a basic requirement for safe and efficient work.

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with other leaflets in the AFAG series relevant to the intended work activity. Further guidance on the provision of training is in the HSE leaflet INDG345 *Health and safety training: What you need to know*.

## Legal requirements

- ❑ 1 It is a legal requirement that people are adequately trained and competent to do their job safely. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 place general duties on employers and the self-employed to provide health and safety information and training.
- ❑ 2 The Regulations place an obligation on employers to provide health and safety training for employees, and the self-employed in respect of themselves, when:
  - they first start work;
  - they are exposed to new or increased risks; and
  - they require refresher training - at appropriate intervals, particularly if the skills are not used frequently. This is recommended at specific intervals for certain high-risk activities, eg operating chainsaws.
- ❑ 3 Employers must provide training during working hours and employees should not have to pay for it.
- ❑ 4 Managers and supervisors need to:
  - accept they have a responsibility to manage health and safety;
  - recognise that health and safety is part of good management practice; and
  - take action to ensure good standards of health and safety.
- ❑ 5 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) place more specific duties on employers and the self-employed to ensure that any person who uses or supervises the use of work equipment has had adequate training. In particular, the Approved Code of Practice accompanying the Regulations requires:
  - drivers of self-propelled machines (including any attachments or towed equipment) to have received adequate training;
  - anyone working with chainsaws to hold a Certificate of Competence award or national competence award relevant to the work they undertake.

- ❑ 6 The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 (COPR) require those applying agricultural pesticides to have had relevant training and be competent for the duties they are to perform. Operators born after 31 December 1964 **or** who will be spraying as a commercial service must hold the appropriate Certificate of Competence issued by NPTC or the Scottish Skills Testing Service (SSTS), unless they will be under the direct and personal supervision of a person who holds such a certificate. If born before 31 December 1964 and working on their own or their employer's land, operators still need to be able to demonstrate competence and show proof of appropriate training.
- ❑ 7 The responsibility for providing relevant training rests with the employer or self-employed person. However, the responsibility for deciding the level of training and competencies required for a particular worksite falls to the person commissioning the work (the forestry work manager).

## Provision of training

- ❑ 8 People new to a particular operation should receive adequate information and training to carry out their work safely and effectively. Depending on the nature of the operation, the training may vary from very simple instructions provided by their supervisor, through to nationally recognised courses providing comprehensive basic training and accredited qualifications.
- ❑ 9 Training provision can be broken down into three categories:
  - **In-house training** is provided by the employer, either personally, or through other 'competent' members of staff. In some cases, external trainers may be brought in, for example where manufacturers offer an induction training course after new machinery has been purchased. Post-course assessment of competence will be needed. Where the in-house trainer does not have specialist knowledge then the training should only be for low-risk activities.
  - **College or specialist training courses** are offered by colleges and other specialist training centres and delivered by trainers who are industry/technical specialists. They may not necessarily be registered with a nationally recognised training organisation or quality assured to an industry-recognised national standard. Post-course assessment of competence may be needed. Colleges and specialist training centres may also provide nationally registered training courses and Certificates of Competence that fall into the description of nationally recognised training and certification.
  - **Nationally recognised training courses** are carried out by registered specialist instructors. Organisations offering this level of training will be able to demonstrate that the course is delivered by an instructor who has qualifications appropriate and relevant to the course subject. The organisation will also be able to demonstrate that the instructor is independently assessed and attends regular updating and standard-setting events. This ensures a consistent delivery of courses to national standards.
- ❑ 10 In practice, training is likely to involve a combination of in-house, college or specialist training and nationally recognised courses.

- 11 Due to the high-risk nature of many forestry and arboriculture operations it is strongly recommended that registered specialist instructors on recognised courses carry out the training.

## Certification

- 12 For certain forestry and arboriculture operations, independent assessment is necessary to confirm that the training has been fully understood and appropriate skills developed. Such certification is now recognised by the industry and enforcing authority in respect of a wide range of operations, eg use of chainsaws and, more recently, machine operations under the Forest Machine Operators Certificate Scheme (FMOCS).
- 13 Nationally recognised Certificates of Competence, accredited by the UK regulatory authorities, are obtained following independent assessment carried out by registered assessors who are quality assured to national standards. The assessment is independent of any training needed.
- 14 Certificates of Competence awarded by a recognised national awarding body are a straightforward way of proving competence to a known level for a particular work activity, without the need for additional supervision, assessment and record-keeping.
- 15 The level of risk should always be assessed in each situation. For certain machinery operations, such as using brush cutters, chippers, stump grinders and mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs), operators can choose between an Integrated Training and Assessment (ITA) course leading to a Certificate of Basic Training or an independently assessed Certificate of Competence.
- 16 In-house, college or specialist training needs to provide an equivalent standard of training to any recognised training and certification that is available, but not mandatory. This means that detailed records need to be kept to show who provided the training (including their level of competence), what the training consisted of, its duration and how it was carried out. Post-course assessment of competence and a system of quality assurance will also be needed.
- 17 Table 1 provides advice based on 'industry best practice' in relation to the level of training and certification needed for the main activities carried out in forestry and arboriculture. The list is not exhaustive, and employers and the self-employed should check that all their activities carried out at work are considered.

## Consolidation of training

- 18 Where training is being consolidated through workplace-based experience for a probationary or apprenticeship period, or before competence assessment, the trainee should hold a recognised certificate of training. They must be supervised by a person who is competent in the relevant skills and, where appropriate, holds the relevant Certificate of Competence.

## Refresher training

- 19 Where experienced, full-time operators have received basic training and/or achieved a Certificate of Competence, it is recommended that they attend regular refresher training to

maintain their skills and knowledge level. Competency certificates will normally identify the refresher training period and in most cases this would be within five years. However, refresher training may need to be provided more often (every two to three years) for those operators who use their skills less frequently. It is recommended that non-certificated training also follows these time periods.

## Chainsaws and aerial tree work

- 20 For professional chainsaw operators working in forestry and arboriculture, the adequacy of training for all chainsaw operations, including aerial tree work, needs to be confirmed by an independent assessment, leading to the award of an accredited NPTC Certificate of Competence in the relevant unit or units. This is also a common requirement in contracts of service.
- 21 Arborists operating a chainsaw during tree-climbing operations need to have the additional Certificates of Competence, CS40 'Carry out pruning operations' and/or CS41 'Undertake sectional felling', as relevant. Groundsmen should hold the industry recognised NPTC Certificate of Competence CS45.
- 22 Chainsaw operators working outside forestry and arboriculture at a basic level (occasional users) can attend an Integrated Training and Assessment (ITA) course leading to a Lantra Awards Certificate of Basic Training. This applies to the operations of chainsaw maintenance, basic cross-cutting and felling material up to 200 mm diameter. This will be recognised as meeting the requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.
- 23 Occasional users wishing to fell material over 200 mm diameter must hold an NPTC Certificate of Competence.

## Further advice

- 24 Further advice on training can be obtained from a number of sources including colleges and the following organisations:
  - **Lantra Awards** is a nationally recognised training organisation providing a UK-wide register of training providers and instructors, offering training across all aspects of tree work and other land-based skills. Registered training providers may be colleges, training organisations, companies or individual instructors. For general enquiries and details of training providers in your region contact Lantra Awards, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire CV8 2LG Tel: 02476 419703.
  - **NPTC** is a nationally recognised awarding body, accredited by the UK regulatory authorities, offering assessment for Certificates of Competence across all aspects of tree work and other land-based skills. For general queries and details of assessment centres in your region contact NPTC, Stoneleigh Park, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire CV8 2LG Tel: 02476 696553 Website: [www.nptc.org.uk](http://www.nptc.org.uk).

Table 1

| Activity  | AFAG leaflet | Training required but not Certificate of Competence | Certificate of Competence and training required | Available NPPTC/SSTS unit |
|---|--------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Establishment</b>                                  |              |   |   |                           |
| Pre-planting spraying of container-grown seedlings    | 102          |   | ✓   | PA 1 and 6 or 2a          |
| Planting  | 103          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Fencing   | 104          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Hand-held power posthole borer                        | 105          | ✓   |   |                           |
| <b>Maintenance</b>                                    |              |   |   |                           |
| Hand tool weeding, brushing and pruning               | 201          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Application of pesticides by hand-held equipment      | 202          |   | ✓   | PA 1 and 6                |
| Clearing saw  | 203          | ✓   |   |                           |
| <b>Chainsaws</b>                                      |              |   |   |                           |
| Using petrol driven chainsaws                         | 301          |   | ✓   | CS30 or CS30.1            |
| Basic chainsaw felling and manual takedown            | 302          |   | ✓   | CS31                      |
| Chainsaw snedding                                     | 303          |   | ✓   | CS31                      |
| Chainsaw cross-cutting and manual stacking            | 304          |   | ✓   | CS30 or CS30.2            |
| Chainsaw clearance of windblow                        | 306          |   | ✓   | CS34 CS35                 |
| Chainsaw felling of large trees                       | 307          |   | ✓   | CS32 CS33                 |
| Top-handled chainsaws                                 | 308          |   | ✓   | CS39                      |
| Use of winches in directional felling and takedown    | 310          |   | ✓   | CS32 FMO4                 |
| <b>Work off ground</b>                                |              |   |   |                           |
| Tree-climbing operations                              | 401          |   | ✓   | CS38                      |
| Aerial tree rescue                                    | 402          |   | ✓   | CS38                      |
| Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) for tree work | 403          |   | ✓   | Certificate of Competence |
| <b>Extraction</b>                                     |              |   |   |                           |
| Tractor units in tree work                            | 501          |   | ✓   | FMO 1                     |
| Extraction by skidder                                 | 502          |   | ✓   | FMO 4                     |
| Extraction by forwarder                               | 503          |   | ✓   | FMO 3                     |
| Extraction by cable crane                             | 504          |   | ✓   | FMO 5                     |
| Extraction by horse                                   | 506          | ✓   |   |                           |
| <b>Processing</b>                                     |              |   |   |                           |
| Mobile circular saw bench                             | 601          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Mobile peeling machine                                | 602          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Mechanical harvesting                                 | 603          |   | ✓   | FMO 2                     |
| Wood chippers   | 604          | ✓   |   |                           |
| Mechanical roadside processing                        | 605          |   | ✓   | FMO 2                     |
| Mobile stump grinders                                 | 606          | ✓   |   |                           |
| <b>Vehicles</b>                                       |              |   |   |                           |
| ATV quad bikes  | 701          | ✓   |   |                           |
| All-terrain vehicles                                  | 702          | ✓   |   |                           |