

Introduction

This appendix imparts awareness of some of the risks which may be encountered during tree inspection, whilst it is not exhaustive it provides an indication of the hazards, controls, minimum training and suggestions for inspection, equipment and recommendations based on risk assessment.

This guidance, which has been based on publicly available documents, has been produced to give an a guide to some of the risks involved with tree inspection to owners who have a responsibility to undertake tree inspection. Employers are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that workers have an adequate level of health, safety and environmental awareness training to carry out the role.

Whether tree inspection is conducted on roads, rail, amenities and private estates; it is a hazardous occupation. The selection of the actual method of work should be made by a competent person/organization and should reflect the risks and location specific circumstances of the work.

Owners should have a tree safety management policy, for example the objectives of tree inspections could be as follows:

- To maintain a safe environment for highway users
- To support landowners/occupiers to maintain their trees for highway safety
- To prevent the obstruction of carriageways, cycle ways and footways
- To permit forward visibility to signs
- To facilitate maintenance works
- To determine the frequency and type of tree inspections

Similar policies would be required of other owners especially where there is a risk to the general public.

Training

It is the employers' responsibility to ensure anyone working as a tree inspector is adequately trained, competent in all related areas of his job role and hold a LISS/CSCS Blue Skills Card. Suitable training has been developed in association with Lantra Sector Skills Council and it is the requirement of this scheme that workers to be eligible for a LISS/CSCS Blue Skills Card. See the LISS/CSCS Scheme Booklet (Appendix C).

- Currently the Lantra Professional Tree Inspectors Course is the only recognised qualification. Training to achieve this qualification may include:
 - Intermediate Tree Inspection course
 - Basic Tree Survey and Inspection course
 - Lantra Awareness Tree Inspection course for Highway Engineers
 - Or equivalent

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When surveying trees close to roads, high visibility clothing must be worn. This must comply with the current Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations.

Other PPE may be appropriate as dictated by your site-specific risk assessment.

Equipment

The employer/organization needs to consider what type of equipment is to be provided and determine how instruction in the use of that equipment is to be given prior to its use. This may include:

- Wooden or nylon mallet
- Binoculars
- Probe
- Knife
- Secateurs
- Sample bags
- Compass
- Pencil
- Clipboard/weather writer
- Maps/plans
- Girth/diameter tape
- 30 meter measuring tape
- Hand lens
- Clinometers/hypsometer
- Camera
- Identification books
- Callipers
- Boarers
- Bark gauges
- Decay detection drill

Identifying and categorising defective trees (including hazards & controls)

Defective trees are identified by:

- Expert scheduled inspections
- Expert unplanned checks
- Scheduled check during safety inspection
- Unplanned check
- Reports from the public
- Reports from employees

Insurance

It is strongly advised that Professional Indemnity (PI) insurance is taken out by arboricultural consultants and consulting arborists for an amount to a level of cover sufficient to meet the worst case scenario. The minimum level of insurance could be as low as £1,000,000 (Arboricultural Association minimum) however the standard levels advised may be higher.

Objectives for good practice

- Recognise the role of the tree inspector in risk management and identify the legal framework in the context of statute and common law that affect tree inspection and the duties and liabilities of the owner, manager and inspector.
- Summarise how a tree system functions, what constitutes a safe tree and understand that energy is required to keep the tree healthy.
- Adopt a systematic and consistent methodology for carrying out visual tree inspection at an advanced level.
- Collect data in accordance with the inspection instructions using a suitable format
- Observe mechanical and biological defects seen in trees and confirm by the use of textbooks where necessary.
- Identify a range of commonly seen pests, diseases and disorders especially fungi that affect tree safety, identifying them by the use of textbooks where necessary.

- Understand and be able to state the arboricultural significance of finding fungi in the field.
- State the appropriate control or remedial measures required to eliminate or reduce risks identified in the inspection process to an acceptable level. Determine when an aerial inspection is required, also if pro-active management recommendations can be made which may eliminate future defects from forming.
- Prioritise the necessary tree or management works with time scales based on a broad category of risk assessment.
- Identify when it is appropriate to recommend the use of decay detecting or measuring equipment.
- Understand that a balance between the remedial measure opted for and the range of benefits/values that a tree may have requires special attention, for example amenity, wildlife, historical, veteran, rarity and public access.

Safe Practice

- Do not attempt to carry out any work which you have not received adequate training, are not competent, appropriately dressed or suitably equipped.
- Access to private property must be agreed beforehand unless powers of entry are a lawful right.
- When parking a vehicle, it must be safely positioned and, where necessary, display appropriate and adequate warning lights and/or position appropriate warning signs.
- If using a vehicle for the purposes of carrying out tree inspection it must display appropriate and adequate warning lights. It is strongly recommended that the inspection of trees carried out in this manner is done as a two-person operation, one to drive while the passenger carries out the visual inspection.
- It is strongly recommended that inspectors hold, as a minimum, a current approved 'Emergency at Work' First Aid Certificate.
- Always work within the requirements of the current Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations in relation to risk assessment, and consider the specific risks of all the different sites that you visit and carry out a risk assessment. Always follow the procedures specified in your organization's 'lone working' recommendations.
- Always carry a functional mobile phone or radio to enable contact with colleagues in case of emergency, as this type of work is usually carried out alone. Lone working recommendations must be observed.
- When dealing with members of the public always remain polite and understanding and follow company procedures. If the situation deteriorates, walk away and call for assistance if needed. Avoid confrontational situations.
- To avoid sharps or faeces at the base of trees, use suitable equipment e.g. gloves, trowel, litter picking graspers (See Appendix Q), to remove debris dispose, in accordance with appropriate guidance.