

This month, Tim Kirk looks at the protective clothing issues connected with chainsaw use...

Sharp dresser

Last month we looked at the Health and Safety issues involved in the training of chain saw operators. This month we will look at the requirements of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

As from July 1, 1995 manufacturers are not permitted to produce leg protection (trousers and leggings), foot protection or head and ear protection that does not comply with the relevant European Standards and CE requirements that apply to them. All items of chainsaw protective clothing must have its relevant EN number on the article and packaging. This does not apply to PPE that had entered the chainsaw prior to July 1 therefore there will be a natural overlap until the 'old' equipment has worked through the system.

All items of chainsaw PPE do not protect by utilising the same method. There are three main functional principles involved; to pro-

vide a surface that the chainsaw will not readily bite into; by using fibres that have a high resistance to cutting and absorb rotational energy which reduces chain speed; and the use of long loosely woven fibres that will be pulled into the cutting train and clog the chain rotation.

All operators of chainsaws must wear PPE which consists of a safety helmet, suitable eye protection, ear defenders, gloves with protective guarding on the back of the left hand, leg protection incorporating clogging material, safety boots with protective guarding at the front vamp and instep with a good grip and non snag outer clothing. They should also have with them a first aid kit including a large wound dressing and hand cleaning materials waterless skin cleanser or soap and water.

Any item of chainsaw PPE that is damaged, worn or no longer serviceable should be replaced immedi-

ately. The worn piece of equipment should be discarded so that there is no danger of it being 're-issued'.

chainsaw PPE only acts to mitigate against injury and does not prevent accidents occurring. Operators should be trained in its correct use and care.

Routes to certification - The first chainsaw Certificates of Competence appeared as a direct result of the Health & Safety Executive Guidance Note GS48 and were issued by the NPTC (National Proficiency Test Council). At the time it was thought that the relevant Vocational Qualifications (VQ) units would have equal recognition.

Various problems arose and trainees wishing to claim the NPTC Certificate paid twice for confirmation of the same competence. The Forestry & Arboriculture Safety & Training Council then took the decision to partner the Business

and Technology Education Council in England and Wales. BTEC was happy to take on board FASTCo's ideas to improve the VQ units and at the same time issue competence certification based on the new VQ units.

In effect there are now three different routes to certification, the first by way of a stand-alone competence test administered by the NPTC, the second by a BTEC/SCOTVEC competence certification derived from a VQ achievement and finally by NPTC competence certification derived from a NPTC VQ achievement.

In the next issue we will look at the safe working practices when using a petrol powered chainsaw.

For further information on training courses and consultancy contact Agenda Training Limited (Jean John on 01282 831973) or Tim Kirk of T. Kirk Forestry on 01484 685114.

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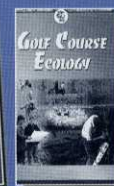
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