

What are the hazards and how might they harm?



Cuts, lacerations and amputation from sharp blades or tools, incorrect use of equipment



Trip injuries from obstructions, falls on uneven ground and slopes



Impact injuries from flying debris



Eye injuries from flying debris



HAVS from overuse of equipment



Impact injuries from moving vehicles



Explosion or fire as a result of ignition of petrol

What PPE should the individual wear?



What other precautions should be taken?

Do not exceed the total use time per day allocated to your particular machine

Hedge trimmers

including double sided, single sided and long-reach

Safety Task Card
STCBG 06

Safe System of Work

1. Only use a hedge trimmer if you have been trained to do so and are familiar with the specific model being used.
2. You must wear reinforced toe cap safety boots or safety wellington boots, non-sag overalls or clothing with long sleeves and legs, a high vis vest or jacket, goggles, gloves and hearing protection when using a hedge trimmer.
3. If working on a slope or embankment banks boots or crampons should be worn for better grip.
4. Lanyards etc. must be contained within your overalls, long hair must be tied back, and any jewelry removed.
5. Use barriers or signage to restrict access to the work area, particularly when working in areas where there is likely to be pedestrian or vehicle traffic. Consider the area on the other side of the hedge if there is any risk the blade could penetrate.
6. When carrying the hedge trimmer, it must be turned off and the blade must be covered with the scabbard. If transporting it in a vehicle, it must be turned off, the blade must be covered, the fuel tank upright, the fuel line turned off and the machine held in position.
7. Familiarise yourself with the safety cut out switch and ensure this is working.
8. Ensure all guards are fitted and in good condition, that all grease points are greased and there are no fuel leaks.
9. Inspect the area for trip hazards, fencing, power cables and any other obstructions.
10. Check the hedge for any loose or foreign objects and remove these.
11. Place equipment on firm ground, remove the scabbard and check the blade and all other moveable parts for damage. Remove any debris from the blade and ensure the blade is not touching the ground or any obstructions, before starting it, following the manufacturer's instructions.
12. Always keep the equipment and blade in front of you and cut away from yourself and others.
13. Maintain a safe working distance between yourself and others; stop work immediately if any person or animal approaches the area of operation.
14. To cut vertical faces (sides), lower the nose to the base of the hedge and cut, perpendicular to the hedge, from the bottom up, move forward and then cut from the bottom upwards again.

If you have any concerns, stop and speak with your line manager before proceeding

List any additional hazards or risks you have identified, and control measures required to manage these.

Hedge trimmers

Safety Task Card STCBG 06

including double and single sided continued

Safe System of Work

15. To cut a horizontal face (top) angle the cutting blade slightly (0° to 10°) and swing the blade away from yourself in a horizontal sweep. The sweep should be made from the opposite side of the hedge from the operator towards the nearside so that cuttings are swept on to the ground.
16. When removing thick or dense growth it might be necessary to make several passes to gradually reduce growth.
17. Do not overreach or lean into the hedge – you must be well balanced at all times.
18. Be aware that blades run on for a short period after the trigger is released.
19. Clean cutting blades or teeth to remove resin, gum or other debris at regular intervals.
20. Regularly clear cuttings to remove trip hazards.
21. Never use equipment with one hand.
22. Do not attempt to cut branches that are too thick for the equipment and do not cut branches that could cause the blade to get trapped or hit an obstruction.
23. If the blade becomes entangled or jammed, turn it and the fuel line off before attempting to free the blade.
24. Turn the machine off when refueling, cleaning the machine or engine, sharpening the blade, making any adjustments (other than adjusting the chock or throttle), when leaving equipment unattended, or if you hear unusual noises from the equipment. Switch off the fuel tap if leaving equipment unattended and when finished.
25. Keep hands warm, do not grip equipment tightly and take frequent breaks to avoid fatigue.
26. Comply with any exposure limits placed on the hedge trimmer. Do not exceed the total use time per day allocated to your particular machine.
27. The hedge trimmer must be turned off and have cooled down before refueling it in a designated area, away from sources of ignition and in the shade.. Where required use a funnel and clean up any spillages immediately. Small spillages can be wiped up and a spill kit must be used for larger spills.
28. Follow the controls in the relevant COSHH Product Assessment and ensure the correct fuel type is used and correctly mixed with two-stroke oil where applicable.
29. Never smoke or handle ignition sources while refueling.

If you have any concerns, stop and speak with your line manager before proceeding