



West Berkshire
Countryside Society

WBCS – Use of brush cutters

Recommendations and safe practice notes.

Please read in conjunction with WBCS Risk Assessment and Site Safety Sheets

Based on LANTRA award booklet – edition 04/05/07 Prepared - October 2013

<h3>1. Preparing for brush cutter operations</h3>	<h3>3. Engine maintenance and fuelling.</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out and the significant findings recorded. (see <i>WBCS RA for each task</i>) ❑ Operators should not normally work alone ❑ All workers on site to be made aware of and comply with the controls identified. ❑ Ensure that a designated and responsible person on site knows the emergency procedure. (see <i>WBCS task RA</i>) ❑ In case of emergency, be able to provide the emergency services with adequate information. (see <i>WBCS task RA</i>) ❑ Erect warning signs and barriers as necessary - especially if public involved. ❑ PPE –Helmet with face shield, eye and ear protection, gloves, leg protection and boots. ❑ First Aid kit with eye wash to be available on site. ❑ Designated first aider on site ❑ Fire extinguisher to be available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ See LANTRA booklet and manufacture’s manuals for details of maintenance procedures ❑ Fuelling site to be well clear (4 metres) of other sources of ignition — e.g. fire sites and work sites.
<h3>2. Machine checks</h3>	<h3>4. Operating the brush cutter</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Site check- ground conditions, cables? ❑ Debris check – glass, syringes, excrement etc. ❑ Check for rare or toxic plant species. ❑ Erect warning signage as necessary ❑ Starting – blade should not rotate on tick over. ❑ Cutting head should rotate without excessive vibration. Adjust as necessary. ❑ Ensure a safe working distance (at least 15 m radius / 50ft) between workers. ❑ Use a lookout if working near public access areas and use an agreed warning routine. ❑ Using metal blades – be aware of “kickback” from hard objects – rocks, tree stumps etc.
<p>General visual inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ All safety features are present and properly adjusted. ❑ All controls are working correctly ❑ There are no loose or broken parts ❑ The harness is properly adjusted. ❑ Fuel tank filled with correct fuel mixture. <p>Specific maintenance points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Clean - air filter, fuel tank filter, cooling fins. ❑ Check/adjust spark plug & carburettor. ❑ Sharpen blade and check gearbox grease 	<h3>Other information</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Legislation involved - HASAW 1974 and PUWER 1998 ❑ HSE/AFAG leaflets AFAG 802 Emergency planning AFAG 203 Clearing saw. – a separate qualification is recommended for this tool. <p>All at :- www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/forindex.htm and http://www.hse.gov.uk/treework/index.htm</p>