

# Chainsaw training requirements

Felling trees with chainsaws can be one of the most dangerous activities in forestry, and it is essential that such activities are carried out by highly skilled and competent operators.

Certificates of competence were introduced in the early 1990s to improve operator safety, but despite this development the accident rate remains unacceptably high. Improving chainsaw safety is one of the priority goals of the UK Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA). This initiative, led by a cross-industry working group, includes a new scheme for update and refresher training for chainsaw operators. It is targeted at certificated operators who have not received any formally recorded chainsaw training for a period longer than five years.

## FISA Training

The scheme is not a recertification – it is a measure of competency and an opportunity to refresh existing skills and learn new techniques. It is designed to enable the forest industry to comply with guidance from HSE, which recommends that all chainsaw operators have regular (at least every 5 years) refresher training to ensure that they work to industry good practice and maintain their levels of competence. The scheme allows two approaches to refresher training: Tailored or Standard.

The scheme was developed by a cross-industry working group including representatives of the Forestry Commission on behalf of FISA. Although the scheme is not mandatory, FISA recommend that individual businesses, landowners, managers and members of the endorsing organisations all adopt the scheme. As a member and supporter of FISA, the Forestry Commission has fully endorsed the scheme.

Contract awards require chainsaw operators to demonstrate that they have undertaken formally recorded chainsaw training within the five-year period immediately prior to the commencement of any operation/contract with participating organisations.