

Introduction

This leaflet covers the safe working practices to be followed when using mobile stump-grinding machinery.

You can use this leaflet, along with the manufacturer's handbook, as part of the risk assessment process to help identify the controls to put in place when using mobile stump grinders.

You must also assess the effect of the site and the weather as well as following this guidance.

All operators must have had appropriate training in how to operate the machine and how to carry out the tasks required (see AFAG leaflet 805 *Training and certification*).

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ❑ 1 Use the following PPE:
 - Asafety helmet (complying with EN 397) if identified as required in the risk assessment.
 - Hearing protection (complying with EN 352) where the noise level exceeds 85 dB(A) (see HSE pocket card INDG363 *Protect your hearing or lose it!*).
 - Eye protection (a mesh visor complying with EN 1731 or safety glasses to EN 166).
 - Protective boots with good grip and ankle support (complying with EN 345-1).
 - Gloves with reinforced palms and fingers.
 - Non-snap outer clothing. The use of high-visibility clothing may also be appropriate.
 - ❑ 2 Each person should carry a personal first-aid kit including a large wound dressing (see HSE leaflet INDG214 *First aid at work: Your questions answered*).
 - ❑ 3 Hand-cleaning material such as waterless skin cleanser or soap, water and paper towels should be readily available.
- ## The machine
- ❑ 4 Ensure any belts, shafts and fan blades are guarded on both the machine and power source.
 - ❑ 5 Ensure the debris curtains around the cutting head are present, intact and adequate.
 - ❑ 6 For machines driven by a power take-off (PTO) shaft, before starting ensure:
 - the PTO shaft is fitted with a suitable guard, complying with EN 1152, that encloses the shaft along its full length from tractor to machine;

- the guard is correctly fitted and in effective working order (see AS24(rev) *Power take-offs and power take-off drive shafts*);
- the PTO speed is suitable for the machine.

- ❑ 7 Ensure there is a clearly marked and working engine-stopping device readily accessible to the operator from the normal working position.
- ❑ 8 A suitable fire extinguisher should be readily accessible.

Fuelling

- ❑ 9 Stop the engine and, if necessary, allow to cool before refuelling.
- ❑ 10 Petrol vapour is invisible and can travel considerable distances from spillage or fuelling sites. Maintain a safe distance from all sources of ignition at all times.
- ❑ 11 Store fuel to avoid vapour ignition from any source such as fires, people smoking or the stump grinder. Select a site shaded from direct sunlight and away from watercourses and drains.
- ❑ 12 Containers must be clearly labelled and have securely fitting caps. Plastic containers must be designed and approved for use with petrol or diesel fuel.
- ❑ 13 Replace the fuel cap securely.
- ❑ 14 Keep fuel from contacting the skin. If fuel gets into the eyes wash out with sterile water immediately and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Maintenance

- ❑ 15 Ensure maintenance is carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's handbook.
- ❑ 16 Before working on the cutting mechanism, ensure the engine-stopping device is applied, the key has been removed from the ignition and the cutter mechanism secured.
- ❑ 17 Check the cutters each day for damage and wear. Replace as necessary during the working period if damaged, or if worn beyond the manufacturer's recommended tolerances.
- ❑ 18 Replacement cutters should be machined to match the existing cutters to ensure appropriate cutter mechanism balance. If necessary, the whole cutter set should be replaced.

Preparing to work

- ❑ 19 On all reasonably foreseeable approaches to the worksite, erect warning and prohibition signs conforming to the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996, indicating a hazardous worksite. In areas of high public access, your risk assessment may show that additional controls (eg barrier tape, barriers/screens, extra manning) are required.

- ❑ 20 The operator should stop work if the safe working area is breached.
- ❑ 21 Ensure all operations near to highways are adequately signed with the appropriate notices as specified in the DTLR Code of Practice *Safety at street works and road works* (available from The Stationery Office ISBN 0 11 551958 0).
- ❑ 22 Select as firm and level a surface as possible and stabilise the machine. If this is not possible consider creating a level site or an alternative means of stump removal.
- ❑ 23 If the machine is detached from the tow vehicle ensure the grinder's parking brake is applied.
- ❑ 24 When working at the roadside, position the cutting head to direct wood chips away from passing pedestrians and traffic.
- ❑ 25 To protect people and property at risk from flying debris, always use supplementary screening.
- ❑ 26 Ensure the cutting mechanism rotates freely without fouling.

Emergency procedures

- ❑ 27 Ensure a designated and responsible person knows the daily work programme and agree with them a suitable emergency contact procedure. Where reasonably practicable use a mobile phone or radio and a pre-arranged call-in system.
- ❑ 28 Ensure the operators can provide the emergency services with enough detail for them to be found in the event of an accident, eg the grid reference, the distance from the main road, the type of access (suitable for car/four-wheel drive/emergency service vehicles). In urban areas street names are essential. Know the location details before they are needed in an emergency. (Also see AFAG leaflet 802 *Emergency planning*.)

Operating the machine

- ❑ 29 Ensure the site is checked for underground services.
- ❑ 30 Check the stump(s) to be ground are free from stones and metal so far as is reasonably practicable.
- ❑ 31 Manually excavate and reveal buttress roots.
- ❑ 32 Operate the machine from a point that gives a clear view of the cutting operation.
- ❑ 33 **Never approach the cutting mechanism until it has come to a complete stop.**
- ❑ 34 Clear wood chips as necessary to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the grinder.
- ❑ 35 Ensure any excavations do not create a tripping hazard to pedestrians once the operation is completed.
- ❑ 36 When leaving the machine unattended always remove the engine start key.