

No: IGS 207

Infrastructure Group Safety Bulletin

Prohibition on the use of Brush Cutter Metal Blades (Ref IGS 204)

Prohibition Lifted

This bulletin is for the attention of: IMDM's, Off Track Staff, Training, Maintenance Workforce HSE Advisors, All Network Rail Maintenance Staff



Pictures are for illustrative purposes only

Following recent trials by the Engineering Plant Team and Maintenance, it has been determined that :-

The prohibition of Metal Blades in conjunction with brush cutting equipment, advised in Infrastructure Group Safety Bulletin No. IGS 204, is now lifted.

Action to be taken

Use the approved Heads available through HSS Hire and Speedy Hire.

Follow all safety procedures in place for brush cutting as set out in Task Risk Control Sheet NR/L3/MTC/0003/SP021 "Use of Brush Cutter/ Strimmer" and NR/C&TM/SP/01 "Brush cutter/ Strimmer Training Plan" at all times.

In particular it is important that operators remember the following:

1) Protective clothing

At all times wear:

- Safety helmet conforming to EN397.
- Ear defenders conforming to EN352-1.

- Eye protection Polycarbonate visor.
(or goggles with visor attachment conforming to EN166.1.F).
- Dust mask when applicable conforming to EN149.
- Safety footwear conforming to EN20345.
- Gloves conforming to EN388.
- HV Clothing (All Orange).
- Stout trousers/leg protection

2) Pre-Start Preparation

Before using brush cutting equipment:

- Select the appropriate head/blade:
- When cutting light material such as long grass, a trimmer or a brush cutter with a Poly Trim or Nylon Wire head is appropriate.
- When cutting woody material or brambles a metal blade is required and if there are obstructions that create a risk of kickback the 8-11 o'clock sector of the blade (clearing saw) should be used.
- Check the condition of the blades for sharpness, fracture, cracks, splits or tears. If any defects are found in the blade the brush cutter must be quarantined until the blade is changed.
- Check the blade is fixed correctly and the retaining nut is secure.
- Check the correct blade guard is being used. Different guards are required for metal blades and cord heads.
- Check the appropriate blade guard is undamaged and securely fixed in the correct position.
- Carry out a site survey removing any hazardous objects such as toxic plants and ground debris (cans, bottles, needles etc).
- Set up an exclusion zone and if working with others agree a method of operation with them and keep a minimum of 15 metres apart.

3) Machine Operation

Whilst using brush cutting equipment:

- Do not cut too close to the ground as injuries may be caused by stones or wires thrown up during operation
- Organise the work in sequence so that any debris ejected by the saw flies into a safe zone.
- Stop cutting immediately if there is a person within 15 metres.

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