



Network Rail position statement regarding Jo Johnson, Rail Minister's suspension of "all felling during the current nesting season, except where safety critical"

Network Rail undertakes vegetation control to enable the operation of a safe and efficiently performing railway. Those plans should continue, in accordance with Network Rail's Standards and as set out below, which is in line with the recent instruction from the Rail Minister that all tree clearance activities in England and Wales must cease unless permitted by the guidance within this document.

Where work is continued as part of this instruction Network Rail will be required to maintain a count of the trees removed during works. Network Rail has also committed to undertake additional assurance to support this instruction.

Definitions have been derived from forestry legislation relating to felling licences and NR internal standard for vegetation management (NR/L2/OTK/5201). Current nesting season is defined in NR guidance as 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Management scenario	Minimum activity necessary to maintain safe operations			
	Fell trees	Selective thin trees <50%	Remove trees	Lopping, topping, pruning, pollarding
	>10cm dbh	<10cm dbh only	<8cm dbh only	All sizes.
<b>Safety critical tree hazard / condition</b>				
Category 5, 6 and 7 trees		n/a	n/a	
Category 1, 2, 3 and 4 trees		n/a	n/a	
<b>Safety critical due to vegetation affecting railway infrastructure and operations</b>				
Leaf fall / known adhesion problem sites				
Within 300mm of overhead line equipment				
Blocked signal sighting				
Blocked operational sign sighting				
Blocked level crossing sighting				
Branches contacting with trains				
Construction activities				
Clearance for fencing work				
Inspection of structures / earthworks				

	Activities as defined can proceed following breeding bird surveys and all other required environmental checks
	Activities should normally be planned to take place outside of nesting season. If activities must take place, only those highlighted can take place following breeding bird surveys and all other required environmental checks. Work shall be the minimum necessary during the nesting season.
	Felling activities shall not take place between 1 <sup>st</sup> March and 31 <sup>st</sup> August

**Notes**

- **Category 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 trees** – defined using [NR/L3/TRK/003/TEF3077](#) 'Tree Hazard: Risk Evaluation and Treatment System'; modelled tree risk assessments (e.g. POLESTORM, FAILSAFE) require use of TEF3077 to confirm Category 5, 6 or 7 before safety critical tree removal.
- **Selective thin (<50%)** – removal of up to 50% of stems <10cm dbh within an area of woodland. If used in leaf fall risk areas, number of leaves capable of causing issues will be reduced.
- **dbh** – diameter of tree measured at 1.3m up the trunk [diameter at breast height]
- **Breeding bird surveys** – forms and guidance available on Safety Central ([Biodiversity](#))
- **Environmental checks** – if required framework ecological consultants contact details are available on Safety Central ([Biodiversity](#))

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