

Vegetation management during the bird nesting period

Issued to: All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and RISQS registered contractors

Ref: NRA 18/08

Date of issue: 04/06/2018

Location: Network-wide

Contact: [Neil Strong](#), Head of Lineside



Overview

Following lineside neighbour concern about tree felling, the Rail Minister has asked Network Rail to reinforce the instructions about vegetation management, particularly during the bird nesting season (March to August).

A new instruction was issued by the Chief Track and Lineside Engineer on 11 May 2018, confirming which activities must not continue, and which may be undertaken in some circumstances.

Where vegetation management is not allowed, operational safety must be maintained.

Immediate action required

- Suspend all tree felling activity shown as 'red' in the [enhanced guidance](#).
- Ensure ecology survey requirements are met for all vegetation management activity.
- The safety of the railway must be maintained. Where vegetation management has to be postponed or limited to meet the enhanced guidance, appropriate alternative risk mitigation must be used. For example, if adequate sighting cannot be maintained for a level crossing, then actions may require temporary level crossing closure or line speed restrictions.
- If the restrictions on vegetation management impact sighting, safe walkways or refuges for track workers, lengths of track may require enhanced restrictions on systems of work that require lookout warning.
- All staff involved with inspecting and managing the off-track environment must understand the enhanced controls now in place.

Copies of Safety Advice are available on [Safety Central](#).