



## Introduction

This leaflet covers the measures to be taken to ensure that the risk of injury is minimised when using manual tools for tree-planting operations.

You can use this leaflet as part of the risk assessment process to help identify the controls to put in place when tree planting.

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 carry out the tasks required (see AFAG leaflet 805 *Training and certification*).

## General

- 1 Follow best practice during any manual handling operation (see HSE leaflet INDG145 *Watch your back*).
- 2 Organise the delivery of plants to minimise manual handling, eg use mechanised unloading or teamwork at a prepared site.
- 3 Organise the layout of plants on the site to minimise carrying. Where practical use an all-terrain vehicle (ATV).
- 4 Do not attempt to carry too much and adjust the load to suit the plant size and site conditions.

## Plants which have not been treated with pesticide

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- 5 Use the following PPE:
  - Gloves (when planting Sitka spruce or similar species).
  - Non-slag outer clothing.
  - Protective boots or safety wellingtons with good grip (complying with EN 345-1).
- 6 Carry a personal first-aid kit including a large wound dressing (see HSE leaflet INDG214 *First aid at work: Your questions answered*). Know the symptoms of heat stress and the methods required to treat it.
- 7 Hand-cleaning material such as waterless skin cleanser or soap, water and paper towels should be readily available.

### Equipment required

- 8 Suitable planting tools.
- 9 A waterproofed planting bag or plant harness and container.
- 10 A suitable file with a handle for sharpening tools.

## Preparing to work

- 11 Plan the work to maintain a safe working distance from other workers.
- 12 Check that the tool head is secure and the handle is free from splinters and cracks.
- 13 Report any defects in tools and equipment.
- 14 Ensure the cutting edges of tools are sharp.
- 15 Adjust the planting bag or harness for comfortable working and do not overload it.
- 16 Do not carry food or sharp tools in the planting bag.

## Planting

- 17 Maintain a balanced stance.
- 18 Try to avoid striking any hard obstructions.
- 19 Keep the blade clear of feet and shins.
- 20 Carry planting tools safely.

## After work

- 21 Return any plastic/polythene storage bags to the store.
- 22 Check and clean tools before returning to the store.

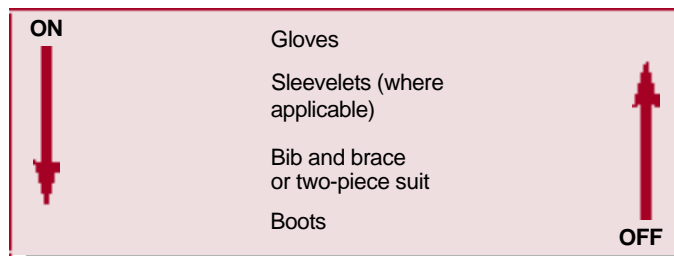
## Plants which have been treated with pesticide

- 23 Where plants have been treated with a pesticide, you should carry out a risk assessment as required under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- 24 Use the following PPE:
  - a suitable protective bib and brace overall (see the selection table in AFAG leaflet 102 *Pre-planting spraying of container-grown seedlings*) and suitable protective elbow-length gloves, or wrist-length gloves (Nitrile, minimum 0.5 mm thickness, complying with EN 374) with cuffs inside protective (plastic) elasticated elbow-length sleevelets; or
  - a suitable two-piece suit and wrist-length gloves with cuffs inside the jacket sleeves; and
  - safety wellingtons or water-repellent boots with a good grip (complying with EN 345-1), to be worn inside trouser legs.
- 25 Store personal clothing away from sources of contamination.
- 26 Ensure all protective clothing is clean at the start of each work period. Replace damaged items promptly. Pay particular attention to gloves.

- 27 Always put on and take off protective clothing in the correct order to avoid contact with contaminated surfaces.



- 28 Whenever gloves or sleevelets have to be removed, thoroughly wash their outsides with soap and water and wipe off surplus moisture before removal. Replace gloves regularly to minimise exposure to pesticides from any internal contamination.
- 29 Always remove gloves and thoroughly wash hands in soap and water before smoking or attending to personal needs.
- 30 At the end of each work period:
  - thoroughly wash the outsides of gloves in soap and water and wipe off surplus moisture;
  - thoroughly wash down the overall/suit;
  - remove protective clothing in the correct order;
  - thoroughly wash hands in soap and water and dry well.
- 31 Where reasonably practicable, use a running artificial water supply for washing. Ensure that different water and different wash bowls are used for protective clothing and for personal washing.
- 32 Ensure washing waste does not contaminate watercourses.
- 33 Use disposable paper towels for drying/wiping off surplus moisture.
- 34 Always put on, take off, hang to dry and store protective clothing away from rest and eating places, stored personal clothing, the personnel areas of vehicles and sources of contamination.
- 35 Store protective clothing in ventilated accommodation.
- 36 At the end of each working day make unusable and safely dispose of gloves and plastic sleevelets unless thoroughly effective cleaning can be guaranteed. **WARNING: Immersion in water is likely to contaminate the inside surfaces.**
- 37 Replace damaged items promptly.

### Additional procedures for treated plants

- 38 Keep treated plants and materials away from rest and eating places, stored personal clothing and the personnel areas of vehicles.