

Title: Grass Cutting by Parishes	
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PLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

1. Introduction

Parish Councils often elect to carry out grass cutting on behalf of the County Council. The Place Directorate has produced the following guidance to assist Parish Councils in carrying out these duties in a safe manner.

2. Scope and Application

This code of practice applies to all grass cutting carried out by Parish Councils on behalf of the Place Directorate.

3. Background

Grassed verges act as safety areas within the highway boundaries and may be cut for the following reasons:-

- Provide a refuge for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians or vehicles with mechanical failures.
- Provide visibility at junctions and bends.
- Provide visibility at road signs, reflector posts etc.
- Preserve the amenities of the road.
- Weed control, e.g., Injurious Weed Act 1959.

4. Risk

The main risks associated with grass cutting are:-

Operator

- Damage to hearing caused by grass cutting vehicle/machine noise.
- Respiratory/allergy disorders from breathing in pollen and dust.
- Damage to limbs and fingers from moving machinery.
- Damage to eyes from flying debris, stones etc. during cutting.
- Injury from losing control of mower when carrying out pedestrian mowing on slopes and embankments.
- Illness during single person working.
- Infection/skin irritation from contact with debris in grass

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- Injury to feet or hands from strimmer when cutting around posts and obstructions.
- Injury to hands while clearing obstructions from mower.
- Injury from passing traffic when stepping onto carriageway.
- UV rays/ hot & weather

Road Users

- Accident/damage through contact with tractor or mower.
- Cyclists skidding on wet grass cuttings.
- Injury from debris, e.g., stones and other detritus thrown up during cutting.

Pedestrians

- Injury from debris, thrown up during cutting.
- Pedestrians slipping on wet grass cuttings.
- Injury from debris, e.g. stones and other detritus thrown up during cutting.

Property

- Damage to windows in buildings and parked and moving vehicles from flying debris, during cutting.
- Damage to trees, plants, fences, service covers etc. from machines/ strimmers.
-

These risks can be minimised by all operatives following a safe system of work and by applying experience and training to the individual requirements of each site.

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The following should be worn:-

- Hard hat,
- High visibility reflective jacket/long sleeved waistcoat (BS EN ISO 20471 Class 3),
- High visibility reflective trousers (BS EN ISO 20471 Class 1)
- Lace up safety boots – non slip
- Gloves
- Safety glasses

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Gloves and eye protection for strimming

6. Equipment

Tractors

- Tractors must have roof-mounted amber rotating beacons. Such that one beacon can be seen from any direction at sufficient distance to allow approaching vehicles to stop safely.
- A sign reading "Highway Maintenance" must be displayed at the rear of the vehicle.

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- A directional arrow sign pointing to the right must be mounted on the rear of the vehicle (900mm diameter, traffic sign Diagram No 610).
- Flails to be left hand side mounted and if rear mounted they must not exceed the width of the machine.
- All equipment should receive a daily walk around check before work commences:
 - Fluid levels
 - Lighting/warning devices
 - Security of attachments, drive belts, prop shafts etc.
 - Guards

Mowers and Strimmers

All mowers, (cylinder, rotating or flail type) and strimmers must have all guards fitted and be maintained in good order.

7 i) Working Methods

Important

Work should not be carried out within the following areas until site specific working methods have been approved by the County Council:-

- End of runway zone on airfield perimeters.
- Adjacent to temporary traffic signals.
- Within an area signed for road works.
- On Central Reservations.

7 ii) Working in proximity (less than) of a Level Crossing

There must be no works within 10m of a level crossing

When working adjacent to or on approaches to level crossings (within to 200m), operatives should ensure that their activities do not affect traffic flows.

For any grass cutting / mobile works (e.g., strimming), hazard information forms should include the consideration of the possibility of debris encroaching on the railway. Thorough checks of the area to be cut/strimmed

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should be checked prior to starting works and any debris removed which may impact on the railway.

No vehicles or machinery should be parked near a crossing which may affect traffic or the operation of the crossing.

If there is any doubt about whether works will affect a level crossing, Network Rail must be contacted via Network Rail ACE Portal.

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8. Flail Mowing – Verges (Rural Areas)

i) **Signing**

Before work commences the grass cutting warning sign (see Appendix H3) must be securely set out at the beginning of the section to be cut and should not present a hazard to road users/pedestrians. When flail mowing is underway the warning sign must be repositioned once the section is completed.

ii) ***Carrying out works***

All cutting shall be a single breed, width 1.1m and shall be carried out with the flow of traffic whilst travelling on the live carriageway.

During cutting operations all beacons will be operational.

Visibility areas can be cut against the traffic provided a minimum of a single breed width is left, between the vehicle and the carriageway.

At junctions, cutting must not be carried out against the traffic.

If flail mowing is being carried out on both sides of the same road, then the tractors must not work within 50 metres of each other (i.e., one must pull over while they pass).

9. Urban Grass Cutting, Vegetation Cutting, Public Rights of Way Cutting

i) **Signing**

Before work commences the grass cutting warning sign (see Appendix H3) must be securely set out in advance of the starting point of the works and should not present a hazard to users of the road or right of way.

When grass cutting is underway the mower must never be more than 500 metres ahead of the warning sign before it is repositioned.

ii) ***Carrying out works***

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Public Safety

Ensure all pedestrians, motor vehicles and horse riders have a safe passage past the working area.

Always be aware of the presence of pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and other highway users.

Operations

Before cutting ensure the area is clear of hazards such as wire, bottles, cans and other materials which could cause damage to the machine or injury to operatives or other highway users.

Sweep up grass cuttings from footways and carriageway edge.

When carrying out pedestrian mowing on slopes or embankments use hover mower or strimmer from level ground position. Ensure full control of the machine at all times. The machine cut out must always be within reach.

Trimming of vegetation around features such as stiles and gates should be carried out using hand tools or strimmers.

Care must be taken to avoid damage to such obstructions and in particular to the bark of young trees, either by collision with the mower or whilst using a trimming tool.

Grass cutting (Urban Areas)

When cutting adjacent to the edge of the carriageway cut in the opposite direction to the oncoming traffic (i.e. facing the traffic).

Cut at least 1.1m wide from carriageway edge in the direction of oncoming traffic if width of area to be cut allows.

Machine Safety

Do not leave the machine with the engine running.

Whenever leaving a machine, turn off the engine and immobilise. Leave in a safe position and safe condition. Never leave any key in the ignition.

If blockages occur, turn machine off and remove plug lead, before attempting to clear any blockages. The same action should be carried out if adjustments to the machine are required.

Do not refuel when the engine is running or hot. Clear up any spilt fuel immediately, move machine before starting.

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When travelling between sites ensure that the drive to all cutters is disengaged.

Appendix H3

Signs to the current Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

Sign to Diagram 7001+ Associated Plate Legend

