WIRRAL GAME FISHING CLUB

CHAINSAW, PETROL STRIMMER, PETROL POLE SAW & LIFTING/PULLING EQUIPMENT – E.G. TIRFOR WINCH, METHOD STATEMENT

Aims and Objectives
This policy and method statement covers all personnel that use chainsaws, petrol pole saws, petrol strimmers, and lifting equipment such as a Tirfor winch as part of their duty.

Background
WGFC for health and safety reasons requires its members to undertake risk assessments of all working party related activities. The Generic Risk Assessment for WGFC associated with riverbank maintenance using the following equipment: chainsaws, petrol pole saws, petrol strimmers, and lifting equipment such as a Tirfor winch will be kept with the Health and Safety Policy.

Operators should be aware of HSE's Approved Code of Practice for chainsaws: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg317.pdf.

Control Measures
Working party leaders have the responsibility to ensure the safe use of chainsaws, petrol pole saws, petrol strimmers and lifting equipment such as the Tirfor winch, tree felling, removal and other associated works.

All volunteers or contractors that use the above equipment as part of their duty **must** be suitably qualified and competent, with the correct certification and must wear the appropriate PPE.

Users should ensure they have sufficient safety equipment that is maintained and meets current standards. To wear appropriate personal protective equipment and inspect the tools before and after work. They have to perform routine maintenance to ensure that the machinery is in good working order and if there are problems to report these to the leader of the work party to arrange repairs.

Minimum Qualifications

Chainsaw and petrol pole saw: NPTC Tree felling and Crosscutting, LANTRA competency certificate for crosscutting and pole saw.
Petrol Strimmer: LANTRA competency certificate. Volunteer operator who, through knowledge and previous use, is considered competent.
Continuous training
All qualified operators should take the opportunity, when possible, to attend refresher course to refresh skills.

Procedures
Chainsaws and pole saws are among the most hazardous power tools used. The unguarded cutting chain, difficult working terrain and stresses applied to the materials to be cut creates high potential hazard. The use of proper operating procedures, personal protective equipment, safeguards and maintenance on saws and proper work planning and execution can greatly reduce these potential hazards. Note: safe use of a chain saw requires an alert operator. It is very important to take breaks, for example 10 minutes for every tank refuel and 30 minutes for every 3rd tank.

Tool Components
All saws must be fitted with the following in good working order:
Chain brake (tested before sawing and engaged while walking), throttle interlock or dead man's finger* (the chain should stop shortly after removing fingers from the throttle).
Chain catcher (in case a broken chain is carried towards the operator).
Muffler (to limit engine noise)*, good conditioned shock absorbers* (these control the hand arm vibration limitations of work) and a kill switch*.
*Also applies to brush cutter and pole saw.

PPE
Chainsaw and petrol pole saw
Head protection with visor and ear defenders, leg protection and boots These are mandatory for the work and must be to BS EN 397, BS EN 14052 or BS EN 12492 for the helmet, the ear defenders can be BS EN 352-1, BS EN 352-2 or BS EN 352-3, the eye visor should be BS EN 1731. The leg protection trousers should

conform to BS EN 381-5, and the boots to BS EN ISO 17249

Petrol Strimmer
Head protection with visor and ear defenders should be worn and to BS EN 166, it is only advised that chainsaw gloves to BS EN 381-7 should be worn, trousers should conform to BS EN 381-5, boots to BS ENISO 17249.

Operation: Use of petrol with chainsaw, pole saw, and strimmer

Mixing 2-stroke and Petrol:
It is extremely common for chainsaws and brush cutters to be sent back to retailers with engines sent back with damage due to incorrect fuelling. The primary cause of this is using fuel which has been prepared incorrectly mainly by forgetting to add 2- stroke mix. These repairs are extremely expensive often with piston reassembly. There are easy ways to get around this. We use fuel containers of different colours for 2 stroke and straight petrol. The superior orange Husqvarna fuel container is for 2 stroke and a green container for straight petrol. Secondly, we should also be responsible for checking we are using the correct fuel for the machine we are using. The fuel must be stored in a UN approved 5l plastic or up to 20l metal safety can. Cans should have a prominent Petrol and highly flammable warning sign (The Petroleum (Consolidation) Regulations 2014 (PCR), which came into force on 1 October 2014).

Fuelling
Fuelling must take place outdoors only. Always shut off engine and allow it to cool before fuelling. Fuel the saw at least 3 metres from sources of ignition, preferably in a drip tray, but if not on bare earth. Wipe up any spilled fuel and check for leaks especially around the cap. The chainsaw must be started at least 3 metres from the fuelling area. For more information cross reference with the specific equipment manufacturers instructions.

Transporting the chain saw, pole saw, strimmer
The chainsaw, pole saw, or strimmer should be transported in a level position with the petrol cap upright, Carrying the chainsaw, pole saw with the engine running is dangerous and should be avoided. The chainsaw should never be carried with the engine running unless the chain brake is engaged. Shut off or engage the chain brake whenever the saw is carried on hazardous terrain. The chainsaw should be transported with the bar covered by a chain guard.

Tree Felling
Tree felling must not be carried unless the operator is fully qualified and competent, with the correct certification and must wear the appropriate PPE, and have carried out the appropriate risk assessment.

Winching Equipment eg Tirfor Winch

Use of the Tirfor Winch
This equipment and the associated equipment used with it such as the steel wire cable, webbing slings, pulleys etc must only be used by a competent operator.

Suitable PPE such as a hard hat must be used when operating the winch, and suitable gloves must be worn to prevent injuries from needling of the wire cable or wire slings.

The main hazards of using winching equipment, and control measures

Hazard - Failure of winch system caused by overloading
Control Measures - The operator must ensure the winch and associated equipment has adequate pulling capacity for the tasks. The safe working load should be clearly visible on the winch and associated equipment, and check that the correct shear pin/pins have been fitted. (refer to the manufacturer's instructions).

Hazard - Failure of winch system caused by inadequate or incorrect maintenance
Control Measures - The equipment should only be used if it has an up-to-date inspection certificate. You should not use any cables and slings that have any damaged wires, kinks, or visible centre fibres, check before each use.

Ensure the equipment is maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Store the equipment in dry conditions, and clean and dry dirty cables and slings after use. Slings should be

hung from non-rusting hooks, and cables should be coiled onto suitable drums.

Hazard - Incorrect Use of Equipment
Control Measures - The competent operator must instruct all volunteers in the correct anchoring and use of the winch.

A suitable exclusion zone must be maintained around the winch and cables, extending a distance at least equal to the length of the cable being used in all directions, and especially the area between the winch operator and the far extent of the cable.

Ensure that the winch, cables and slings are free from obstructions.

Ensure that there is a clear line of pull so that the load can be directed accurately.

Attach the winch cable to the load via an appropriate sling to avoid kinks in the cable.

Anchor points should be suitable for the load to be pulled.

Ensure that only one person operates the winch handle to avoid overload.

Pulleys must be used to keep the operator out of the direct line of pull when using the winch to guide tree felling.