

This risk assessment relates only to the *generic* features of a common activity; it does not cover those *specific* to a location or group. It therefore must not be used without completing the local review, making additions as necessary to take account of local circumstances. However, such a local review need not be timeconsuming. Use the box at the bottom to create the local review, or add extra pages as necessary. **SEE ACCOMPANYING SAFETY NOTES**

ACTIVITY ASSESSED	ASSESSOR	ASSESSMENT DATE
11. USE OF BATTERY POWERED BRUSH CUTTERS	STEPHEN BOLSOVER	7 th February 2025
HAZARD potential for harm	RISK LEVEL	PRECAUTIONS to remove hazard or reduce risk level. One precaution may tackle several hazards.
Operator: Contact with moving blade	H	Only trained competent persons to use these machines: see restrictions on subsequent page. Stand firmly on both feet when operating to avoid falling over. If you do stumble, fall onto your knees. A natural response is to fall at length with hands outstretched, you must not do this since this brings the hands close to the blades. If plant material becomes tangled in the blade wait until the blades have come to a complete stop then try to clear the material while the machine is still attached to the harness, using thick gloves and keeping hands clear of the blades. If this fails to clear the blades, EITHER take the machine off the harness and remove the battery before working to clear the blades, OR get a second member of the team to remove the battery then work to clear the blades. For the second option, it is critical that the battery be removed first, because if the operator is still holding the machine in the working position then it would only take a small hand movement to start the motor were the battery still in.
Operator: Flying debris If the blades contact bricks, large stones or masonry there is a small chance either that these items are thrown back towards the operator or that the blade breaks and fragments fly back towards the operator. This is an unlikely event but a potential risk of fatal or serious injury.	H	Check the ground for bricks, large stones and masonry before beginning work and be alert for these while working; do not allow the blades to touch these items. Always cut from right to left and away from feet. Ensure all machines guards are properly fitted and in good condition. Always wear long trousers and sturdy footwear. Protect eyes with either eye protectors or hard hat with mesh mask.
Others: Contact with moving blade or flying debris	H	Do not operate if there is anybody within a 10m radius of the machine. EITHER place hazard warning signs at all points at which the public could enter the work area OR post a lookout able to halt work. While working the operator should remain aware of their surroundings and stop the motor if any other volunteer or member of the public gets close. If a member of the public arrives at the edge of the work site expecting to pass, stop the motor, step aside, and motion or tell them to pass.
Fatigue and vibration	H	Do not use machine for extended periods, take regular breaks. Adjust harness and handles for comfortable use before beginning work. Wear clothing that protects from the element and allows easy movement but will not obstruct or get entangled.
Machine hazards: handles, kickback, compression, electric shock, vibration etc.	M	Ensure equipment is in good condition, check nuts/ bolts/screws before use. Keep the blades sharp - this reduces the load on the motor (as well as cutting more efficiently) and thus extends the life of the motor. Cut right to left. Clear ground of debris before beginning work. Wear gloves at all times.

Skin irritation or dermatitis from plant sap	L	Some plant materials, eg. Giant Hogweed, become hazardous only in association with the UV of sunlight, causing phytophotodermatitis; but others like Euphorbia can be nasty just on their own. Therefore, skin/eye contact with sap and other plant materials is to be avoided by wearing suitable clothing, gloves and goggles. If contact does occur, wash off skin and/or irrigate eyes with clean water thoroughly: at the site if water is available, otherwise emphasize to the worker that this should be done as soon as possible on return home.
--	---	---

Risk level: L = Low, M = Medium, H = High

RISKS AND PRECAUTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE SITE OR DAY ASSESSOR ASSESSMENT DATE APPLICABLE DATES (This is likely either to be one specific day, or “until further notice”.)
--

ACTIVITY ASSESSED	ASSESSOR	ASSESSMENT DATE																
11. USE OF BATTERY POWERED BRUSH CUTTERS	STEPHEN BOLSOVER	7 th February 2025																
RESTRICTIONS A brush cutter is a motor driven device that cuts not only grass and herbs but also substantial brush and small trees using a rotating metal or plastic blade. Strimmers that use rotating string or hinged plastic blades no larger than a lolly stick are covered by the previous risk assessment. This risk assessment specifically relates to battery powered brush cutters. Since these are quiet, the operator is more aware of the surroundings and so is unlikely to be surprised by a coworker or member of the public getting close. On the other hand, these machines do not automatically register as dangerous in the way that noisy petrol machines do, so there is a greater risk of members of the public ignoring warnings and coming close. Operators should make sure that they remain aware of their surroundings and stop the motor if any other volunteer or member of the public gets close. If a member of the public arrives at the edge of the work site expecting to pass, stop the motor, step aside, and motion or tell them to pass. Not for use by untrained volunteers. Volunteers who are to use a brush cutter are to be trained in its use by an experienced user, which we take to mean someone who has used the machine for at least 4 occasions over a year. The volunteer must convince the experienced user that they are able to use the machine safely. Notice of this training and informal assessment should be recorded. <table><tr><td>Experienced users:</td><td>Persons trained:</td></tr><tr><td>Claire Abbott</td><td>Neville Day 27th November 2013</td></tr><tr><td>Stephen Bolsover</td><td>Simon Braidman 27th November 2013</td></tr><tr><td>Nick Smith (volunteer at Roxbourne Park and Rough)</td><td>Moe Farhand 27th November 2013</td></tr><tr><td>Miles Robertson</td><td>Maya Dodwell 14th May 2014</td></tr><tr><td>Marian Rastelli</td><td>Roshan Tailor 20th May 2021</td></tr><tr><td>John Winter</td><td>Charlotte Lippitt 6th February 2025</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Hilary Coombes 6th February 2025</td></tr></table> Stihl battery brush cutters can be used in rain. However working in inclement conditions: cold, wet and windy weather, particularly on exposed sites, is unpleasant and dangerous so that volunteers will be less careful and have less concentration thus increasing risk of accident under these conditions. The body is more at risk when cold. in wet conditions. When the ground and vegetation is wet the risk of slipping and falling is greatly increased while the efficiency with which soft material such as grass and small plants is cut is markedly reduced. Only work in the rain if you feel confident and comfortable in doing so, and after use in the rain dry the brush cutters and the batteries with a towel and leave the batteries to fully dry before recharging them. In very hot, sunny conditions be aware of sun burn, sunstroke (especially on windy days) and heat exhaustion.			Experienced users:	Persons trained:	Claire Abbott	Neville Day 27 th November 2013	Stephen Bolsover	Simon Braidman 27 th November 2013	Nick Smith (volunteer at Roxbourne Park and Rough)	Moe Farhand 27 th November 2013	Miles Robertson	Maya Dodwell 14 th May 2014	Marian Rastelli	Roshan Tailor 20 th May 2021	John Winter	Charlotte Lippitt 6 th February 2025		Hilary Coombes 6 th February 2025
Experienced users:	Persons trained:																	
Claire Abbott	Neville Day 27 th November 2013																	
Stephen Bolsover	Simon Braidman 27 th November 2013																	
Nick Smith (volunteer at Roxbourne Park and Rough)	Moe Farhand 27 th November 2013																	
Miles Robertson	Maya Dodwell 14 th May 2014																	
Marian Rastelli	Roshan Tailor 20 th May 2021																	
John Winter	Charlotte Lippitt 6 th February 2025																	
	Hilary Coombes 6 th February 2025																	
PREVENTATIVE MEASURES First aid kits must always be on site and in a location near to and known to everyone. The machine must be used according to the manufacturer's operating instructions. Check that all persons and animals are clear of work area. Loose clothing, eg. flapping sleeves should be avoided. Wear overalls if possible. Use any harness the machine has with it. Check the cutting head or blade is tightened properly before use. Check guards are secure and never operate the machine with missing or defective guards. Stand firmly on both feet whilst operating machine and always cut away from your feet.																		
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT Operators must wear stout gloves and boots. Steel capped safety boots are advised but not essential since while the machine is attached to the harness the blades are not able to approach the feet. Eyes must be protected EITHER with eye protection goggles OR by wearing a hard hat with mesh face shield.																		
TRAINING These machines must only be used after appropriate training has been given either by the hire company or by a qualified person with a comprehensive knowledge of how they work and how to work safely with them.																		
MONITORING Nearest point of contact for emergency services must be known and approximate time for services to attend be established: the implications of a long response time must be specifically considered. Avoid contact with plant sap/materials and wash off thoroughly if this occurs. Ensure operators take regular breaks. Check that hazard signs erected/lookout posted to warn public or halt work.																		