



NPTC

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**Level 2
CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE
IN BRUSHCUTTING OPERATIONS**

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

NPTC LEVEL 2 CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE IN BRUSHCUTTING OPERATIONS

Candidate Information

Introduction

The scheme will be administered by NPTC.

NPTC will:

- Publish
 - scheme regulations
 - assessment schedule
 - assessment material
- Approve centres to co-ordinate and administer the scheme
- Set standards for the training of Verifiers and Assessors
- Recruit, train and deploy Verifiers
- Manage verification
- Issue certificates to successful Candidates

The Certificate of Competence

Certificates of competence will be awarded to Candidates who achieve the required level of competence in the Units to which their Certificate relates.

Instruction

Attendance at a course of instruction is not a pre-requisite for an application for an assessment but potential Candidates are strongly advised to ensure that they are up to the standards that will be expected of them when they are assessed.

NPTC does **not** hold a register of instructors; however instruction will normally be available from recognised training providers and/or centres of further or higher education active in the areas covered by this certificate. Further information on training may be obtained from the approved Assessment Centre.

Access to Assessment

Assessment Centres will be responsible for arranging assessment on behalf of a Candidate. Assessment may only be carried out by an Assessor approved by NPTC for that scheme. Under no circumstances can either instructors involved in the preparation of candidates, or the candidates work place supervisors, or anyone else who might have a vested interest in the outcome, carry out the assessment.

The minimum age limit for Candidates taking certificates of competence is 16 years. There is no upper age limit.

Assessment

Assessment is a process by which it is confirmed that the Candidate is competent in the Units within the award to which the assessment relates. It is a process of collecting evidence about his/her capabilities and judging whether that evidence is sufficient to attribute competence.

The candidate must be registered through an NPTC approved Assessment Centre for this qualification, prior to assessment.

The result of the assessment will be recorded on the assessment report form.

The schedule of assessment contains the performance criteria relating to:

- Observation of practical performance
- Assessment of underpinning knowledge

Performance Evaluation

The result of each assessment activity is evaluated against the following criteria:

- 4 = Meets or exceeds the assessment criteria by displaying a level of practical performance and/or underpinning knowledge, with no 'minor' or 'critical' faults. (Competent).
- 3 = Meets the requirements of the assessment criteria for both the practical performance and the underpinning knowledge, with some 'minor' faults but no 'critical' faults. (Competent).
- 2 = Does not fully satisfy the requirements of the assessment criteria, being unable to perform the practical task satisfactorily or being deficient in underpinning knowledge leading to the recording of minor faults. (Not yet competent).
- 1 = Does not satisfy the requirements of the assessment criteria, being unable to perform the practical task satisfactorily or safely or being deficient in underpinning knowledge leading to the recording of a critical fault. (Not yet competent).

A list of registered Assessment Centres is available from NPTC. (www.nptc.org.uk)

Verification

Verification is a process of monitoring assessment; it is an essential check to confirm that the assessment procedures are being carried out in the way that NPTC has laid down. The overall aim of verification is to establish a system of quality assurance that is acceptable in terms of both credibility and cost effectiveness.

Approved Assessors will be subject to a regular visit by the verifier at a time when assessments are being undertaken.

A selection of assessment reports completed by the assessor will be evaluated by an NPTC approved verifier.

Compliance with the verification requirements is a pre-requisite for Assessors remaining on NPTC's list of approved assessors.

Complaints and Appeals

NPTC and its Assessment Centres have a formal Complaints and Appeals procedure. In the event of a any dissatisfaction with the arrangements and conditions of assessment, the candidate should first contact the Assessment Centre through whom the assessment was arranged and submit the complaint in writing.

For further information on NPTC's Equal Opportunities Policy and Complaints and Appeals Procedures, please refer to www.nptc.org.uk

Learning Outcomes

The candidate will be able to:

1. Identify, inspect and comment on **key** parts of the machine
2. Prepare the machine for work safely without risk to themselves, other people or the environment
3. Carry out daily and routine maintenance on the machine
4. Operate a Brushcutter/Clearing-Saw/Trimmer safely and effectively and comfortably in accordance with the practical risk assessment
5. Operate the Brushcutter/Clearing-Saw/Trimmer safely without risk to themselves, other people and the environment
6. State the identified knowledge that underpins understanding of operating a Brushcutter/Clearing-Saw/trimmer

Guidance Notes for Candidates and Assessors

The assessment is divided in to 4 units:

1. Maintain the Brush Cutter/Clearing Saw/ Trimmer (compulsory)
2. Operate a Brush Cutter
3. Operate a Clearing Saw
4. Operate a Trimmer

Candidates who hold the NPTC Certificate of Competence in Chainsaw and Related Operations, Unit 30 are exempt form assessment in activities **9, 10, 11, 12 and 13** of Unit 1 in this qualification.

Qualification endorsement

The qualification may be endorsed either:

- a) Brush Cutter And/Or b) Clearing Saw And/Or c) Trimmer

Candidates seeking assessment in 'a)' are assessed in Units 1 and 2.

Candidates seeking assessment in 'b)' are assessed in Units 1 and 3

Candidates seeking assessment in 'c)' are assessed in Units 1 and 4.

Candidates must successfully achieve all assessment activities, in the units they have elected to take.

Safe Practice:

The assessment is carried out in accordance with the safety guidelines laid down in FASTCo Safety Guides: 203, 801; Health and Safety Executive publications and current legal requirements.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times.

Any equipment used must be operated in such a way that the Candidate, Assessor, other persons or equipment are not endangered.

Failure to operate safely and comply with these requirements will result in the Candidate not meeting the required standard.

It is recommended that suitable barrier creams are used when necessary.

Validation of Equipment:

A Manufacturer's instruction book or other operators' manual should be available.

All equipment being used for this assessment must comply with the relevant requirements of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998.

Any appropriate brushcutter/clearing saw/trimmer complying with legal requirements is acceptable for the assessment, provided it is suitably equipped for **all** assessment activities to be carried out.

Additional Information:

May be sought from the relevant manufacturer's instruction book, operators' manual or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Unit 1 – Maintain the Brush Cutter/Clearing Saw/ Trimmer	
Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of guarding requirements for the machine being used	- All moving parts must be guarded as defined in operator's manual/ manufacturers handbook.
2. Identify appropriate safety clothing and protective equipment needed for use	Unless otherwise stated in manufacturers handbook or operators manual, PPE should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Face/eye protection - Safety boots - Non snag clothing - Hard hat - Other protection as highlighted by the Risk Assessment
3. Demonstrate knowledge of “reasonable precautions” necessary when working in areas to which the public has access	Appropriate precautions that can be made to protect the operator and public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authorities informed about work - Warning signs erected - High visibility clothing worn - “Exclusion zone” set up - Road or dual carriageway lane closed/coned off
4. Demonstrate knowledge of personal safety precautions to be taken when carrying or moving the brushcutter	For safe lifting and handling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid manual handling where possible - Use mechanical aids - Use safe lifting techniques (bend knees and keep back straight)
5. Demonstrate knowledge of what is involved in a Risk Assessment	Risk Assessment must be specific to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site - Task - Machine Risk Assessment must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified hazards - Evaluated risk - Control measures to be implemented - Emergency procedures - Risk Assessment must be communicated to operator
6. Demonstrate knowledge of possible risks when operating a brush cutter/ clearing saw/ trimmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flying debris - Machine getting caught in thick undergrowth - Moving parts in contact with limbs - Contact with underground hazards - Kickback - Bio hazards
7. Check site for hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walk the site and remove or mark hazards - Confirm the condition of the site as acceptable for the operation to take place - Report to the appropriate person if the site condition is unsuitable
8. Set out warning signs and barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erect signs where appropriate advising the public of hazards - Erect barriers where necessary to exclude the public and animals - Implement suitable controls to protect the operator
9. Demonstrate knowledge of air filter maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Filter prevents debris entering carburettor and needs to be clean to maintain air/fuel ratio and therefore performance - Filter cleaned using brush or washed in water with detergent then dried - Excess debris removed from around filter prior to removal - Filter removed, protecting carburettor - Filter maintained appropriate to condition - Filter refitted correctly
10. Clean power unit/covers and inspect for damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Debris removed from fins/air intake - External screws, nuts and bolts present and secure

Unit 1 – Maintain the Brush Cutter/Clearing Saw/ Trimmer (continued)

Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
11. Service the spark plug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engine cover and spark plug removed - Plug cleaned or replaced as necessary - Wear/damage assessed visually - Gap size is checked and set if necessary - If fuel rich, dark brown to black - If fuel starved, light brown to white
12. Service recoil starter mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starter cover removed and air holes cleared - Cord inspected for wear - Cord and coil spring released and re-tensioned - Pull toggle checked for security - Slack spring cord does not fully retract - Over tight spring binds before cord fully extended <p>Cord wears at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Base of toggle - At attachment to pulley wheel
13. Demonstrate knowledge of fuel/ oil filter maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fuel cap removed - Filter located and removed from tank using appropriate tool - Condition of filter determined - Cleaning procedures using non flammable detergents followed by rinsing and drying or replacement as appropriate - Drain tank - Flush with appropriate solvent
<p>14. Either a) Brush Cutter</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Sharpen brush cutter knife secured in work vice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove blade guard - Secure blade using appropriate method (locking pin, spanner, etc.) - Remove retaining nut (L/H thread) and blade assembly - Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blade length • For damage to blade - Position blade for filing securely - Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operator position for filing cutting edge • Operator position for filing trailing edge • Method of supporting blade in work vice • Angle of file is acceptable • Angle and shape of knife • Sharpness of cutting edge • Balance of knife - Use template if necessary - Inspect blade for cracks and other damage - Clean drive shaft and collar - Re-fit blade, washer and lock nut securely replaced according to manufacturer's recommendations

Unit 1 – Maintain the Brush Cutter/Clearing Saw/ Trimmer (continued)

Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
<p>14 continued... OR b) Clearing Saw</p> <p>i) Sharpen five left and five right hand teeth of blade fixed to machine on site</p> <p>ii) Sharpen and set remaining teeth with blade removed and secured in a vice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove guard - Position saw on support - Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operator stance for filing right hand teeth • Method for support of machine and blade for sharpening • Stance of operator for filing left hand teeth • Tooth being filed is at 12 o'clock position • Angle of file and holder is acceptable • Angle and shape of tooth • Sharpness of cutting edge • Replacement of guard is secure - Secure blade using appropriate method (locking pin, spanner etc) - Remove retaining nut (L/H thread) and blade assembly - Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of teeth • Damage to teeth - Select shortest tooth and sharpen to manufacturers specification - Select and set callipers to obtain even filing size of all teeth - Check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle and shape of tooth is acceptable • Sharpness of cutting edge • Gullet depth • Use of setting tool Re-check and adjust teeth (if necessary) - Inspect blade for cracks and other damage - Clean shaft - Re-fit blade, washer and lock nut - Replaced according to manufacturer's recommendations - Remove locking pin (if used)
<p>OR c) Trimmer</p> <p>Remove nylon cord from trimmer and refit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure nylon head using appropriate method (locking pin, spanner) - Remove retaining nut (l/h thread) and nylon assembly - Remove casing - Inspect and comment on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casing • Retaining nut - Comment on retaining nut - Check length of nylon cord - Check cord for any damage to nylon - Insert new reel of nylon cord or refit existing nylon cord as appropriate - Re thread nylon - Clean shaft - Re-fit nylon head - Re-fit washer and lock nut - Nylon to recommended length according to manufacturer's recommendations - Secure lock nut or replace according to condition

Unit 2 - Operate a Brush Cutter	
Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the safety requirements to consider prior to operating machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear protective clothing at all times - Ensure Risk Assessment observed - Ensure safety of bystanders - Maintain minimum safe working distance of 15 m at all times
2. Remove blade guard, start engine and if required adjust carburettor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove and retain guard - Start engine - Set carburettor if required to ensure maximum blade speed is not exceeded - Check that blade is stationary at idling speed - Adjust high-speed screw to maximum power, not exceeding maximum blade speed
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the maximum blade speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum blade speed set according to manufacturer's instructions
4. Adjust harness	<p>Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Length of shoulder straps - Length of side straps - Position of chest plate - Position of hip guard - Machine well balanced - Working height achieved - Handle bar set (if applicable)
5. Operate the brushcutter as appropriate to work situations covering 3 rows x 25m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select appropriate method(s) - State alternative methods - Stop engine and replace guard immediately after use
6. Operate the brushcutter using the scything method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of throttle - Ensure blade speed when cutting is appropriate - Use legs and hips to work machine - Cut vegetation using scything action - Plan work sequence efficiently - Clear jammed blade safely - Clear vegetation adequately
7. Operate the brushcutter using the swatting method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of throttle - Ensure blade speed when cutting is appropriate - Use legs and hips to work machine - Cut vegetation using appropriate method - Plan work sequence efficiently - Clear jammed blade safely - Clear vegetation adequately

Unit 3 - Operate a Clearing Saw	
Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the safety requirements to consider prior to operating machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear protective clothing at all times - Ensure personal safety - Ensure safety of bystanders - Maintain minimum safe working distance of 15 m at all times
2. Remove blade protector, start engine and if required adjust carburettor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove and retain guard - Start engine - Set carburettor if required to manufacturers instructions - Check that blade is stationary at idling speed - Adjust high-speed screw for maximum power, not exceeding maximum blade speed
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the maximum blade speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set maximum blade speed according to manufacturer's instructions
4. Adjust harness	<p>Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Length of shoulder straps - Length of side straps - Position of chest plate - Position of hip guard - Machine well balanced - Working height achieved - Handle bar set
5. Operate the clearing saw as appropriate to work situations covering 3 rows x 25m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select appropriate method(s) - State alternative methods - Stop engine and replace guard immediately after use
6. Operate the clearing saw using the pushing and pulling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of throttle - Ensure blade speed when cutting is appropriate - Use hips and legs to work machine - Assessment of stem lean - Use of blade sector (left and right) - Use of blade rotation - Identify kick out sector - Clear jammed blade - Clear vegetation
7. Operate the clearing saw using felling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure blade speed when cutting - Is appropriate - Use hips and legs to work machine - Assess stem lean - Insert sink cut - Insert felling cut - Use appropriate blade sector - Stump height - Clear jammed blade - Treat stump

Unit 4 - Operate a Trimmer	
Assessment Activity	Assessment Criteria:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the safety requirements to consider prior to operating machine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear protective clothing at all times - Ensure personal safety - Ensure safety of bystanders - Maintain minimum safe working distance of 15 m at all times
2. Remove nylon guard (if appropriate), start engine and if required adjust carburettor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove and retain guard - Start engine - Set carburettor if required to manufacturers instructions - Check that nylon cord is stationary at idling - Adjust high-speed screw for maximum power, not exceeding maximum nylon cord speed
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the maximum nylon cord speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set maximum nylon cord speed according to manufacturer's instructions
4. Adjust harness (where applicable)	<p>Check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Length of shoulder straps - Length of side straps - Position of chest plate - Position of hip guard - Machine well balanced - Working height achieved - Handle bar set
5. Operate the trimmer as appropriate to work situations containing a minimum of three obstacles e.g. shrubs, trees, plants covering an area of approximately 30m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select appropriate method(s) - State alternative methods - Stop engine and replace guard immediately after use
6. Operate the trimmer using the scything method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of throttle - Adjust nylon cord speed when cutting as appropriate - Use legs and hips to work machine - Adopt cutting action - scything - Plan work sequence - Clear jammed nylon cord - Clear vegetation adequately
7. Operate the trimmer using the swatting method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of throttle - Adjust nylon speed when cutting as appropriate - Use legs and hips to work machine - Adopt cutting action - swatting - Use undercutting action - Clear jammed nylon cord - Clear vegetation adequately