

## **EMBARGOED Until**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

### **The National Tree Safety Group News Release**

#### **Breaking News for January 2012**

At this time of year when many people are thinking of planting new trees The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) is launching its guidance on the common sense management of existing trees.

The NTSG is an exemplar of a broad partnership of government, the private sector and civil society working together effectively to a collective goal.

The guidance is quite simply an easy to use practical management tool. It helps large landowners and individual tree owners who wish to be reassured that they are fulfilling their duty of care to visitors and passersby alike. It provides sensible, clear and unambiguous practical advice in a way that is easy to read and can be interpreted to suit most, if not all, locations where trees grow. Locations ranging from trees in forests, woodlands and rural areas through institutional and commercial land to parks, gardens and domestic properties in urban areas.

The documents that will be available are:

1. Common sense risk management of trees (The main guidance document priced at £19.99 plus P&P)
2. A Landowner Summary (for estates and smallholdings available free)
3. Managing Trees for Safety (For the domestic tree owner available free)

This guidance has been produced over a period of three years following the commissioning of new research into trees and risk, extensive consultation on early drafts and considerable effort by the NTSG Drafting Group in drawing together all the various views, concerns and priorities expressed by the full NTSG membership.

Judith Webb Chair of the NTSG said:

*"This suite of guidance documents brings together the best, generally accepted and balanced approach to managing risks from trees, whilst recognising the many benefits which they provide".*

*"It has been an extraordinary journey bringing together arboriculturists and foresters, the public, private and charitable sectors, landowners and managers and the rural and the urban. What has been rewarding and delightful has been the extent of common understanding born from a common love and knowledge of trees".*

All the guidance documents as hard copies or PDF downloads are now available from the Forestry Commission Publications website. There is a link available from the NTSG website so that interested parties can go straight to the relevant page.

[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B)

[www.ntsg.org.uk](http://www.ntsg.org.uk)

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**Ends**

**Notes to Editors:**

#### **About the National Tree Safety Group**

The group was formed in 2007 to agree a nationally recognised approach to tree risk management. The National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) is publishing its long-awaited guidance document, *Common sense risk management of trees*. The group is unique in that it is composed of organisations from both the public and private sectors that have all come together to agree on a common approach on how tree owners should manage their trees for safety in a way that is proportionate to the risk posed and defensible should the need ever arise.

#### **The guidance**

This new guidance document provides advice for the tree owner that is succinct, comprehensive, but most of all, practical in its application. The broad spectrum of member organisations of the NTSG is reflected in the scope of the advice within

the document, which covers trees growing in forests and estates in remote areas, through land that has occasional public access, to land and individual properties where there is frequent public access. The document also provides advice on understanding the risks from trees, appreciating and managing this risk with a balanced rationale. It details what is required legally for a tree owner to fulfil his/her duty of care. It also uses a number of case study scenarios to demonstrate how the guidance might be applied in various real-life situations.

**The NTSG believes that one fundamental concept should underlie the management of risks from trees. It is that the evaluation of what is reasonable should be based upon a balance between benefit and risk. This evaluation can be undertaken only in a local context, since trees provide many different types of benefit in a range of different circumstances.**

The NTSG position is underpinned by five key principles:

- trees provide a wide variety of benefits to society
- trees are living organisms that naturally lose branches or fall
- the overall risk to human safety is extremely low
- tree owners have a legal duty of care
- tree owners should take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety management.

Managing the risk from trees is the responsibility of the owners and managers of the land on which they grow. There are many different types of landowner and trees grow in many different environments. The guidance has been developed to support the work of all those involved in tree management, whether connected with streets; parks, public open spaces; businesses, such as, hotels or farms; private estates, woodland, commercial forestry, or private gardens. The document's content and structure reflects the NTSG's five key principles.

## **Publication**

As well as the main guidance booklet, there are two supplementary documents – a householder leaflet for the individual domestic tree owner and a landowner summary document for estates and smallholdings. Online PDF downloads and hard copies of all these may be obtained from the Forestry Commission's publications website

[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B)

1. *Common sense risk management of trees* is published in December 2011 available for £19.99 plus P&P.

ISBN: 978-0-85538-840-9. Forestry Commission stock code FCMS024.

2. *Common sense risk management of trees. Landowner Summary of guidance on trees and public safety in the UK for estates and smallholdings.* ISBN 978-0-85538-841-6 Forestry Commission Stock code FCMS025

3. *Managing trees for safety A leaflet for the domestic tree owner* ISBN 978-0-85538-842-3 Forestry Commission stock code FCMS026

The supplementary documents will be available free with P&P for larger orders only