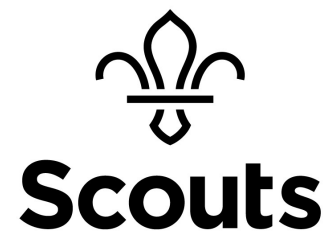


Learning from Safety Incidents – Trees (Inspections)



Item Code: CS245004 Dec/24

Introduction

This case study aims to support all scout volunteers with anonymised information and key learning points on safety incidents reported to UKHQ. By considering real-life scenarios, volunteers can gain valuable insights into effective strategies for managing similar situations and all scout groups are better prepared for future activities.

Case Studie Overview

An Explorer Scout was critically injured sitting on a bench on his own in the dining shelter at a county-owned campsite when a tree branch fell approximately 12m directly onto them.

The Police and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) attended the incident and declared a crime scene, with witness statements being taken from the site manager, volunteers and members.

Alternative accommodation was provided by the campsite, and the camp was taken down the next day following an agreed safe system of work to recover the camping equipment.

The site had a tree survey undertaken 6 weeks beforehand. The tree which lost its branch had been identified for felling with the recommendation of within 6 months. The tree required a tree felling licence from the Forestry Commission and the site had started the process of getting this work commissioned with the aim of it being completed by the end of the summer / early September which would be within 4 months of the tree survey.

Questions to consider

1. Was the risk of falling trees/branches on the risk assessment for the group/site owner?
2. How could you identify environmental hazards on arrival to update your risk assessment i.e. 'look up' & how would that affect your plan to set up camp? Be curious - what questions might you ask when seeing marked-up trees (coloured dots)?
3. Is sufficient emergency planning in place for an incident of this nature/occurring on a campsite away from home?
4. How robust is your InTouch system? Would you be dependent on network coverage to access resources such as Online Scout Manager (OSM)?
5. How would you deal with the remaining members & their welfare in an ongoing incident?

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Key Learning Points

- Ask for a site safety briefing/exchange of information & carry out a hazard check before setting up camp; record this on your risk assessment
- Site owners must follow tree safety guidance thoroughly – zoning, labelling/images, inspections and make sure works are carried out according to zones i.e. higher risk areas are prioritised & progressed
- Make sure all volunteers are familiar with the requirements of the Purple Card to speed up assistance, particularly in terms of media, legal & financial. Ask for what you need i.e. a taxi was provided to return the lead volunteer from the hospital
- Look after each other – provide mental health resources & undertake welfare post-event