



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 11904

2 February 2018

Dear ,

Request for Information – ATISN 11904

I wrote to you on 18 January regarding your request for information. You asked for:

1. How many fatalities due to highway tree failures (trees within falling distance of the highway that fell onto the road) have occurred in each of the five years from the beginning of 2013 to the end of 2017?
2. How many injuries due to highway tree failures have occurred in each of the five years from the beginning of 2013 to the end of 2017?
3. Does your highway authority have a formal tree risk management strategy/protocol/guide for inspecting highway trees? If so, could you please provide the document or a link to it?
4. Does your highway authority require its highway inspectors to look for tree hazards as part of their highway inspection responsibilities?

If yes:

- 4.1. Does the highway authority have a published/formal policy to train highway inspectors in tree hazard recognition?
- 4.2. If the answer to 4.1 is 'yes', is that training through the LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection course, the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection course, in-house training, or other out-sourced training?
- 4.3. Do highway inspectors have specific tree hazard recognition refresher training to keep up to date, and if so, how often?
- 4.4. If the answer to 4.3 is 'yes', is that refresher training in-house or outsourced?
- 4.5. Are the inspections carried out on foot or driven?
- 4.6. If driven, please describe:
 - 4.6.1. at what speed;



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- 4.6.2. how many operatives are in the vehicle;
 - 4.6.3. whether spotters are expected to check trees and highway defects at the same time;
 - 4.6.4. whether spotters are expected to carry checks on both sides of the road during one traverse of the route, whilst driving in a single direction; and,
 - 4.6.5. is there a formal list of tree conditions that trigger the vehicle to stop to allow the inspector to carry out a closer check?
5. Has your highway authority implemented the advice set out in paragraph 5(4) of the Prevention of Future Deaths Report issued by the Berkshire Coroner on 17th July 2014 following the Michael Warren Inquest (<https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/publications/michael-warren/>)?
6. Does your highway authority use professional trained arboriculturists, either in-house or out-sourced, to check highway trees? If so:
- 6.1. In addition to their basic training, does the highway authority have a published/formal policy to provide additional training for arboricultural inspectors through the LANTRA Basic Tree Inspection course, the LANTRA Professional Tree Inspection course, in-house training, or other out-sourced training?
 - 6.2. Do arboricultural inspectors have refresher training to keep up to date, and if so, how often?
 - 6.3. If the answer to 6.2 is 'yes', is that refresher training in-house or outsourced?
 - 6.4. Are the inspections carried out on foot or driven?
 - 6.5. If driven, please describe:
 - 6.5.1. at what speed;
 - 6.5.2. how many operatives are in the vehicle;
 - 6.5.3. whether spotters are expected to check trees on both sides of the road during one traverse of the route, whilst driving in a single direction; and,
 - 6.5.4. is there a formal list of tree conditions that trigger the vehicle to stop to allow the inspector to carry out a closer check?
7. At what frequency are highway tree inspections carried out by a) highway inspectors, and b) arboricultural inspectors, on A, B, and lower category roads.

I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds the information you have requested.

In response to question 1, there have been no fatalities.

In response to question 2, the following injuries have occurred:

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
6*	5**	0	0	Records not yet available

*2013 = 5 Incidents – 6 Casualties. 5 = SLIGHT 1= SERIOUS.

**2014 = 2 Incidents – 5 Casualties. 5 = SLIGHT

In response to question 3, our tree risk management policy and guidance is contained within the current*** Welsh Government's Trunk Road Maintenance Manual (WGTRMM) attached. WGTRMM is the document used by our service providers for the day to day operation, inspection and routine maintenance of the trunk road and motorway network in Wales.

In response to question 4, we require our highway inspectors to look for tree hazards as part of their highway inspection responsibilities for Category 1 defects only. The answers to questions 4.1 to 4.6 are covered in the current WGTRMM.

In response to question 5, Welsh Government Transport was not a direct recipient of the Prevention of Future Deaths Report issued by the Berkshire Coroner on 17th July 2014.

The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation was a recipient. The UK Roads Liaison Group's (UKRLG) guidance "Well Maintained Highways" was updated and replaced with "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice" in October 2016. The new code of practice contains updated risk based guidance on highway tree inspection.

***The WGTRMM is under continual review. The current review is considering any necessary changes to tree management procedures and processes as a result of or due to;

- the updated UKRLG guidance,
- recent court judgements from cases relating to tree inspection frequencies,
- the spread of Ash dieback disease in Wales.

In response to question 6, yes our highway authority use professional trained arboriculturists, either in-house or out-sourced, to check highway trees. The answers to questions 6.1 to 6.5 are covered in the current WGTRMM.

In response to question 7, all roads for which Welsh Government Transport is the highway authority are either 'A' (trunk) or 'M' (motorway) category. Inspection frequencies can be found in the relevant the sections of the WGTRMM.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or FreedomOfInformationOfficer@gov.wales. Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. However, please note that the

Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely