

Forest visitors – pay attention to warning signs and take care

Date published: 27 February 2019

Take care when visiting a forest, as there are risks in a working woodland. It's important to be aware of the hazards to make sure forests can be enjoyed safely. Serious accidents can happen if attention isn't paid to warning signs.

Risks and hazards in forests

The forest is a natural environment and you should be prepared for:

- sudden changes in weather
- rugged terrain
- deep water
- hidden cliff edges

The forest is also a working environment and forest operations take place all year round. Work areas will be clearly signposted and you should obey signs to help your personal safety.

Warning signs are used to highlight dangers and risks, and diversions are put in place to avoid work sites because the heavy machinery used can be very dangerous.

Both felled timber and woodlands that are part-felled can pose dangers.

You can find further safety advice on the following page:

Instructions on site signs is for your protection – following these instructions will help make sure that a visit to the forest remains safe and enjoyable.

More useful links

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Take measures to stop inching towards bad health

People are being asked to measure their waist size to see if they may be inching towards bad health. A waist size of 37 inches or more in men, and 32 inches or more in women, puts you at increased risk of obesity-related health problems.

Measuring waistline

It's important to spot the warning signs for being overweight or obese.

Many people don't measure their waistline correctly as they're unsure of where their waistline actually is.

It's not about the size of your trousers, it's the distance around your abdomen at roughly the halfway point between the bottom of your ribs and top of your hips – the belly button can be used as a good point to do it from.

Follow these steps to help you measure your waist correctly:

- get hold of a standard tape measure
- stand up straight and breathe out naturally
- find the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hips – your waist is halfway between the two
- keep the tape measure snug around your waist and write down the result

Health risks

Many people don't even realise that they are overweight or obese and are at increased risk of:

- coronary heart disease
- some cancers
- developing Type 2 diabetes
- poorer emotional/ psychological wellbeing and self-esteem, especially among young people

Eating more healthily and taking more exercise could help prevent these types of health problems in later life. You can get useful advice and information, including healthier recipes, on the pages below:

You can also get helpful tips and practical advice on how you can measure your waist and reduce your weight at the following link:

Small changes can make a difference

Small changes are easier to make and can add up to make a big difference. Every small step will help keep a healthy weight and improve health and wellbeing, for example:

- having smaller portions
- thinking about what you're buying in the supermarket
- swapping fatty foods for healthier options
- saying 'no thanks' to seconds or the children's leftovers
- going for a walk instead of watching TV

Daily exercise

Watching what you eat isn't the only way to prevent becoming overweight or obese. It's important to also be physically active. The reality is that the majority of us are not getting the 30 minutes of activity we need most days of the week.

Walking is one of the simplest forms of exercise. It doesn't cost you anything and has many health benefits. Walking at a brisk pace can:

- make you feel good
- reduce anxiety
- help you sleep better
- reduce blood pressure
- help you manage your weight

For children and young people, 60 minutes of activity every day is recommended.

You can find out more at the following link:

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[Get help to develop skills and gain qualifications](#)

Date published: 05 January 2018

No matter what stage you are at in your career, skills and qualifications

will improve your chances. Find out what options are available to help you develop the skills you need.

Skills throughout your life

Employers look for skills at all levels and you can develop them throughout your life.

Whether you have just left full-time education or want to improve your current prospects, you can get the skills and qualifications you need to achieve your full potential and to support local businesses and the economy.

Options include:

How to get help

You can find out what programmes and assistance is available to improve your skills by visiting the page below:

You can chat online to a professionally-qualified careers adviser to get impartial advice about your career options:

You can also get information by telephone:

Employers can also get advice and guidance on the range of skills and training programmes available to support local companies.

More useful links

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[Amber warning for strong winds – information and advice](#)

There are things you can do to prepare in case your electricity goes off. There are practical steps you can take if it does.

Weather warning

A amber weather warning for strong winds has been sent out by the Met Office.

[Weather warnings](#) are sent out by the Met Office to let the public and emergency services know about potentially hazardous conditions.

You can find out more about weather warnings on [the Met Office website](#).

Emergency numbers

You should note the following numbers in case of emergency:

- Emergency services – 999 or 112
- Northern Ireland Electricity Networks – 03457 643 643
- NI Gas Emergency Service – 0800 002 001
- Northern Ireland Water Waterline – 03457 440 088
- Flooding Incident Line – 0300 2000 100
- Housing Executive – 03448 920 901

Roads information

You can get the latest updates about roads at this link:

Advice for road users

All road users are asked to pay attention to any road signs and temporary arrangements put in place during severe weather. Longer journey times or cancellations are possible as road, rail, air and ferry services are affected with the chance that some roads and bridges could close.

High-sided vehicles are most affected by windy weather, but strong gusts can also blow a car, cyclist, motorcyclist or horse rider off course. This can happen on open stretches of road exposed to strong cross winds, or when passing bridges or gaps in the hedges.

In very windy weather a vehicle may be affected by turbulence created by large vehicles. Motorcyclists are particularly affected, so keep well back from them when they are overtaking a high-sided vehicle.

Motorists are also advised to drive with care due to possible wind-blown debris.

Travel advice

If you're planning to travel by air or sea, you should check with the ferry company or airline in case there are any delays or cancellations.

Strong winds advice

You should:

- keep your property in a well-maintained condition (for example replace/repair any loose roof tiles, guttering, and so on that could potentially come loose and cause injury or damage to property)
- secure loose objects such as ladders, garden furniture, wheelie bins, trampolines, or anything else that could be blown around
- close and securely fasten doors and windows
- park vehicles in a garage (if you have one) or keep them clear of buildings, trees, walls, and fences
- make sure you are prepared should there be a power cut

During a storm you should:

- stay indoors as much as possible
- if you do go out, try not to walk or shelter close to buildings and trees
- not go outside to repair damage while the storm is ongoing
- not drive unless your journey is really necessary

After a storm you should:

- be careful not to touch any electrical/ telephone cables that have been blown down or are still hanging
- not walk too close to walls, buildings, and trees as they could have been weakened

Preparing for a power cut

It's important to be prepared for a potential loss of power. You should:

- know where your household fuses and trip switches are so that you can check if the problem is with your electrics only
- test smoke alarms regularly
- keep a supply of new batteries in torches and radios (for checking updates on news bulletins)
- keep a supply of candles
- keep mobile phones, laptops or tablets fully charged – so you will have use of battery power for a short time at least
- have the telephone numbers you might need to hand (as well as mobile phones, a non-mains powered landline telephone will help you stay in touch during any disruptions to your power supply)
- if you have a baby at home, make sure you have a supply of pre-prepared formula baby milk (if used) and prepare a flask of hot water to heat bottles and baby food (it is always safer to make up a fresh feed; when this is not possible, feeds should never be stored for longer than 24 hours)

If you depend on electrical equipment that is vital to your health, contact Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) Networks to get on their Critical Care

Register:

If your electricity goes off

If your electricity goes off, you should:

- check your fuses and trip switches – then check if your neighbours are without power
- leave one light on
- leave your fridge/ freezer switched on with the door shut to maintain a low temperature
- check that other electrical appliances and machinery are switched off at the wall
- preferably use a torch, oil or gas lamp as a source of light rather than candles
- if you must use naked flames, please take extra care and make certain that they are put out before you go to bed
- check on elderly or vulnerable neighbours in your area to make sure they are okay
- if you are using a generator, be careful where you site it in case of carbon monoxide poisoning

Reporting a power cut

If your power is off and you want to report it or get more information, contact NIE Networks Customer Helpline or visit their website:

You can find an updated list of areas affected by power cuts on the [NIE Networks website](#).

Water supply

In the event of difficulties with the water and sewerage, you will get the most up-to-date information on areas experiencing disruption on the [NI Water website](#). This includes a full postcode search facility for customers.

You can also phone Waterline 24 hours a day/ 365 days a year on:

Flooding

If any flooding happens, you can report it by phoning the Flooding Incident Line on 0300 2000 100.

There is general flooding advice in the following section:

More useful links

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New Year honours list announced

Date published: 28 December 2018

The Queen's New Year honours list of award recipients for 2019 has been published. Honours are given to people from all walks of life and all sections of society who have made a difference to their community. You can find the full list of people from Northern Ireland who have received honours on [nidirect](#).

List of recipients

Honours lists are published twice a year – at New Year and in mid-June on the Queen's official birthday.

The list, at the following link, contains a wide variety of people from different backgrounds.

Anyone can receive an award if they reach the required standard of merit or service.

There are several different types of award, each one recognising a different type of contribution.

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