

## Oak processionary moth

The larvae, or caterpillars, of the oak processionary moth (OPM) can affect the health of oak

trees, people and animals. They feed on oak leaves, and large populations can strip trees bare, leaving them weakened and vulnerable to other threats. A protein in the caterpillars' tiny hairs can cause skin and eye irritations, sore throats and breathing difficulties in people and animals who come into contact with them.



Because of the health risks, do not try to remove OPM caterpillars or nests yourself, report the presence (or suspected presence) of the pest to the local council or Forestry Commission.



The Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005 has been amended to take the OPM into account therefore, if any Oak tree cuttings are suspected of containing OPM, they must not be removed from the area.

If you believe you have located OPM then speak to your line manager and raise a close call.

## Safe work sites

Our work often interfaces with members of the public.

Always ensure that the security of site is maintained, signage is erected and items are stored away correctly.

Ensure access routes are established, maintained and stable. This will ensure that members of the public including vulnerable persons are not adversely affected by our works.

## Buried services

When breaking any ground, buried services should be considered to be present and a permit to dig issued by your supervisor.

Any services found should be considered as live.

Recently we have identified many services as detailed on drawings, only then to proceed with the dig and find uncharted ones next to these, which were missed from scanning.

Remember just because you find the services you've been advised about, consider that it is likely you will find others close by.

Always use your cat scan throughout the dig and in all modes, to safely identify all services.

## See it, share it

This month's winner is Catalin Hapau of VGC Construction who uncovered a gas pipe less than 20mm under a slab that hadn't been identified, either on Client supplied Stats or by CAT scanning. He immediately stopped his team and escalated to the client management before further hand digging was done to expose the pipe to allow the asset owner to reroute.



Please make sure you share observations and close calls:

Text [07876 448 119](tel:07876448119)

Email [besafe@vgcgroup.co.uk](mailto:besafe@vgcgroup.co.uk)



## Medical requirements

Irrespective of the assignment teams must ensure that medical requirements are consistent even if we have operatives working for a for short duration. This can become more apparent with summer placements. A risk assessment may be required and HSQE can give individual advice if needed. If you are unsure please contact the HSQE on 01895 671890.

## Key influencer engagement

Congratulations to key influencer Victor Rosu at Waterloo for completing monthly engagement forms highlighting the risks and spotting good practice. Thank you.

## Vehicle signage

You should be aware that magnetic signs are not permitted on any VGC vehicle. They can fall off and cause injury or cause an accident. If you require additional signage please contact your Line Manager.

## Environment

On a public road, it is illegal to sit in your car whilst keeping the engine running. The Highway Code states: 'You must not leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road'. Consider air pollution and noise disturbance.



## Network Rail Summer 2018 Campaign — You Vs Train

With school summer holidays upon us, children and teenagers will look for adventurous things to occupy their time, if you see what you believe to be a person who either is, or is about to trespass on the network, Network Rail advise you to call 999 immediately. Network Rail have launched a new campaign titled "You V's Train" aimed at highlighting the dangers from trespassing on the railways. Alarming new figures reveal more than a quarter of teenagers (27%) confess to behaving in a way that could endanger their life on the railway. One in 10 teenagers admitted to walking along the railway line – more than two fifths of those (42%) in the last year.

The number of young people taking risks on the railway track has gone up by almost 80 per cent in the last five years. In the last 12 months alone, seven young people under the age of 18 have lost their lives and a further 48 people have received life changing injuries.

NetworkRail



## Razor blades attached to traffic management signs

Please be aware when moving traffic management signs. There have been reports that individuals are melting razor blades onto the back with the intention of causing harm.

- Always wear your gloves during work activities
- Inspect signage prior to handling
- At night ensure your head torch is worn

Should you come across any instances please do not touch, report to your manager and await further instruction.



## Chamber lids

Whilst operatives were installing cables within a troughing route on a Signalling Renewal Project, a non VGC Group operative stood on a chamber cover. This led to the chamber cover becoming dislodged causing the operative to fall feet first in to the chamber.

Fortunately, the operative only suffered minor cuts and bruises however, however this incident could have had a more serious consequence to the individual.

Please be aware when working around chambers, UTX lids and Drain covers that they may not be secure and could collapse or become dislodged if stood on.

Ensure walkways are clear.  
Remember that both operatives and members of the public including vulnerable users may not be familiar.



## Accidents in the workplace



Provisional figures issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) covering the period from the start of April 2017 to the end of March 2018 show there has been an increase in the number of people killed in workplace.

The two most common causes of fatal injuries at work were falls from height followed by being struck by a moving vehicle or plant. Ensure that safe system of work is followed, fall prevent in place and recovery plan is briefed.

Moving vehicle ensure communication line between operator and operatives are clear, walking routes are established. Only those essential are in the vicinity.

Always maintain the exclusion zone.

## Leptospirosis—Weil's disease

Weil's disease is a form of a bacterial infection also known as Leptospirosis that is carried by animals, most commonly in rats and cattle. It can be caught by humans through contact with rat or cattle urine, most commonly occurring through contaminated fresh water.

You can catch it if soil or freshwater (such as from a river, canal or lake) containing infected pee gets in your mouth, eyes or a cut – usually during activities like kayaking, outdoor swimming or fishing or you touch an infected animal's blood or flesh – usually from working with animals or animal parts

- Cover any open wounds such as cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters.
- Wear protective clothing such as gloves.
- Wash thoroughly and as soon as possible if you have entered the water.
- Assess the risk of the likelihood of contamination if contemplating entering fresh water, particularly be aware of stagnant water.
- Carefully clean any open wounds obtained during time at fresh water.

Leptospirosis is much less severe if it is treated promptly, so consult your doctor if you become ill and inform them of a possible Leptospirosis exposure.

## Plant interface

- ⇒ Always ensure plant is fit for purpose, check it's in date and all pre-user checks have been completed before each use.
- ⇒ Ensure communication channels are understood before any work.
- ⇒ Make sure that only staff who are essential to the task are permitted in the vicinity.
- ⇒ Always wear the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure you can be seen.
- ⇒ Never work unless you've been briefed and other plant in the vicinity has been considered as part of your planning.