

Method Statement (Safe System of Work) for Scything

Please note – The River Foss Society do not run scything courses and defer to risk assessments of other bodies if we join in their sessions. RFS leaders of sessions that may involve use of a scythe still take note of sensible practices to keep volunteers as safe as possible. Currently our members using a scythe bring their own and are personally responsible for it's use.

During each scything session the leader needs to take account of and make volunteers aware of:

Working environment restrictions, Safe tool zone, First aid kit location, Actions in case of an accident.

1) Setting up the scythe

Equipment needed: snath, blades

Potential Hazards: people cutting themselves on blades

Method:

- ⤴ Volunteers are handed snaths and shown how to put them together according to their own physical requirements.
- ⤴ Volunteers are handed blades and shown how to attach them. Blades should not be handed out before volunteers have put their snaths together to encourage them to wait until correct instruction has been given. Instruction will be given as to how to attach the blade using the Allan key in such a way that it minimises the risk of cutting the back of your hand. Volunteers will be instructed not to take their blades covers off.
- ⤴ Volunteers are shown how to set the hafting angle and lay of the blade and are asked to do this to their own blade.

2) Basic technique

Equipment needed: fully constructed scythe

Potential Hazards: volunteers cutting each other

Method:

- ⤴ Volunteers will be asked to find a space well away from other volunteers or passers-by in which to practice scything
- ⤴ With the blade covers still on, volunteers will be asked to practice the motion that they have just learnt
- ⤴ Volunteer's posture will be adjusted where appropriate. Volunteers will be asked to refrain from removing the blade covers.

3) Scything practice

Equipment needed: scythes

Potential Hazards: volunteers cutting each other

Method:

- ⤴ Volunteers are allocated a position from which to start scything. This will usually be in a line with space in between. Volunteers are asked to keep to their position and to make sure that they are aware of what is going on around them if they stop/move off.
- ⤴ Volunteers are monitored by the leader to make sure that they are not getting too close to other people/hazards and also to make sure that they are using the correct technique.
- ⤴ The volunteers will bring the scythes to the designated safe tool zone when not in use.

4) Sharpening

Equipment needed: scythes, stones, kevlar gloves

Potential Hazards: cuts to volunteers

Method:

- ⤴ Kevlar gloves and sharpening stones available and advised by leader to be used.
- ⤴ Any cuts should be reported to the leader and / or first aider if present.

Original method statement devised by Beth Tilston 06/02/2012

Edit and additions for RFS by Andy Mulholland June 2024