

City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Brush- Cutters and Trimmers (0014-41)

Version 2.0 (September 2026)

Assessment Pack – Candidate Version

Candidates are **not** permitted to refer to this document
during the practical observation and questioning.

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.0 June 2025	First version	
1.1 February 2026	Unit number amendment	Contents, Practical Observation Descriptor Table, Appendix 1
2.0 September 2026	Updated content to include battery-powered machinery	Throughout

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Introduction

This assessment relates to the unit in the Qualification Handbook. The assessment can be achieved at pass only. If any task is not yet met, the candidate is unsuccessful.

This assessment contains the following unit and learning outcomes:

Unit 253 Trimmer and brush-cutter operations

1. Know how to carry out a risk assessment
2. Know the health and safety legislation that underpins trimmer and brush-cutter operations
3. Know the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for trimmer and brush-cutter operations
4. Know the health and safety features of the equipment being used
5. Know how to maintain the trimmer/brush-cutter
6. Know how to operate a trimmer/brush-cutter
7. Understand different operating techniques
8. Know how to store equipment safely and appropriately

Endorsement

The assessment may be taken on a machine with the following type of cutting mechanisms:

- 930 Trimmer (Fuel-powered)
- 931 Brush-cutter (Fuel-powered)
- 630 Trimmer (Battery-powered)
- 631 Brush-cutter (Battery-powered)
- 730 Recertification Trimmer (Fuel-powered)
- 731 Recertification Brush-cutter (Fuel-powered)
- 732 Recertification Trimmer (Battery-powered)
- 733 Recertification Brush-cutter (Battery-powered)

General guidance on the requirements for assessment can be found in the Assessor Guidance document available on the City & Guilds web site www.nptc.org.uk

This is not an open book assessment; however, additional technical information may be sought from the relevant manufacturer's operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Record of assessment (ROA)

A pre-populated record of assessment must be completed by the assessor following an assessment. **All** Assessment Criteria (AC) must be completed as either 'Met' or 'Not met' (except where exempt) for each unit on the ROA.

Practical observation descriptor table

253 – Trimmer and brush-cutter operations

Activity number and description from check list		Assessment criteria
1.1	Carry out a risk assessment relevant to the operation to identify significant hazards, those at risk, control measures and emergency procedures	Candidate is required to: - walk the site and remove or mark hazards - report to the appropriate person if the site condition is unsuitable and state why or - confirm that the condition of the site is acceptable for the operation to take place - set out warning signs - position barriers to exclude public/animals (if appropriate) - implement suitable controls to protect themselves - state the emergency procedures in the event of an incident
		May include: - contact with underground hazards - flying debris - biohazards - machine getting caught in vegetation - kickback - moving parts coming in contact with limbs
2.1	Describe the relevant health and safety legislation in relation to trimmer and brush-cutter operations	May include the following: - The Health and Safety at Work Act – specified duties under the act as an employee - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations – a risk assessment must be carried out for all activities - Personal Protective Equipment Regulations – PPE must be supplied and worn - Manual Handling Operations Regulations – avoid manual handling where possible, use safe lifting techniques - The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations – to reduce the risk to health from vibrations - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) – requires that regular checks are made - Noise at Work Regulations – hearing protection must be worn over 85db - Countryside and Wildlife Act – operation carried out at times to minimise the impact on wildlife
3.1	Select the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for trimmer and brush-cutter operations	Unless otherwise stated in the manufacturer's handbook or operator's manual, PPE should include: - hard hat/helmet with visor - face/eye protection - ear defenders - non snag clothing - safety footwear

4.1	4.1a. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (fuel only)	May include:
		- all moving/hot parts to be guarded as defined in the operator's handbook - blade guard (brush-cutter)
		or
		nylon guard and trimming knife (trimmer)
		To include:
		- the operator protection decals - bystander protection decals
	4.1b. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	To include all of the following:
		- on/off switch - choke - Operator Presence Control (OPC) - throttle - throttle lock - primer bulb - decompressor (if fitted)
		Safety precautions may include:
		- risk assessment must be carried out before operation of the machine - PPE must be worn at all times - ensuring the safety of bystanders - a minimum safe working distance of 15 metres must be maintained at all times
		maximum blade or head rotation speed as identified by manufacturer
	4.1c. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	May include:
		- all moving/hot parts to be guarded as defined in the operator's handbook - blade guard (brush-cutter)
		or
		nylon guard and trimming knife (trimmer)
		To include:
		- the operator protection decals - bystander protection decals
	4.1d. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	To include all of the following:
		- on/off switch - Operator Presence Control (OPC) - speed control - speed control lock
		Safety precautions may include:
		- risk assessment must be carried out before operation of the machine - PPE must be worn at all times - ensuring the safety of bystanders - a minimum safe working distance of 15 metres must be maintained at all times
		maximum blade or head rotation speed as identified by manufacturer
	4.1e. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	To include:
		- battery - battery charger
	4.1f. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	May include:
		no smoking/naked flames

		• avoid contact with hot surfaces • check on/off switch • check throttle trigger lock out • ensure battery is disconnected prior to maintenance • keep away from any sources of heat
		May include: • clean and dry • secure • non-metallic • away from heat source • appropriate temperature (as per manufacturer's recommendations)
	4.1d. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	Removal To include: • unclip battery • remove battery • align battery with charger opening • lock battery into charger • switch on power • check battery is charging Installation To include: • check battery is charged • switch off charger • remove battery from charger • align battery with battery opening on machine • lock battery into position • test connections
	4.1e. Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used (battery only)	May include: • do not burn • do not open • not in general refuse • check local authority disposal requirements
5.1	5.1a. Describe the pre-operational checks that should be made to the trimmer/brush-cutter (fuel only)	These may include: • inspecting the machine for damage (including the blade or nylon head) • checking that there is sufficient nylon cord (trimmer only) • inspecting the machine for loose components and fixings • checking the angle drive gearbox • checking the fuel level • fuelling the machine (if required)
		This may include: • no smoking/naked flames • avoiding contact with hot surfaces • fuel topped up to correct level allowing for expansion • any spillage is dealt with using the correct method
	5.1b. Describe the pre-operational	These may include: • inspecting the machine for damage (including the blade or nylon head)

	checks that should be made to the trimmer/brush-cutter (battery only)	- checking that there is sufficient nylon cord (trimmer only) - inspecting the machine for loose components and fixings
		This may include: - no smoking - no naked flames or sparks - avoiding contact with hot surfaces
5.2	5.2a. Identify routine maintenance procedures for the trimmer/brush-cutter (fuel only)	It includes: - clean power unit and covers - service the air filter - service the spark plug - service the recoil starter mechanism - service fuel filter - check angle drive and gearbox - sharpen brush-cutter blade and /or - remove trimmer head and refit new cord or nylon blades
	5.2b. Identify routine maintenance procedures for the trimmer/brush-cutter (battery only)	It includes: - clean power unit and covers - safety precautions for batteries - check angle drive and gearbox - sharpen brush-cutter blade and/or - remove trimmer head and refit new cord or nylon blades
5.3	5.3a. Describe the procedures for maintaining the power unit of the trimmer/brush-cutter (fuel only)	Power unit and covers: - inspect for security and damage – damaged equipment should not be used - external fixings present and secure - debris removed from fins/air intake – allows for cooling of engine - exhaust (muffler) is secure and intact – reduce noise and vibration
		Service air filter: - air filter prevents debris from entering the carburettor and needs to be clean to maintain correct air/fuel ratio - debris removed from around filter prior to removal - filter removed (choke closed or protected) - filter cleaned or new filter obtained (as appropriate) - filter replaced and cover fitted
		Service the spark plug: - if fuel rich – deposits dark brown to black - if fuel weak – deposits light brown to white - engine cover and spark plug removed - plug cleaned appropriately - wear/damage assessed (replaced if necessary) or - gap size checked and set if necessary
		Service starter recoil mechanism: - when the spring is slack the cord does not fully retract - over tight spring binds the cord before it can be fully extended - recognise wear points; at base of toggle and where attached to pulley - starter cover removed and ventilation slots cleaned - cord inspected for wear - cord and coil spring released and re-tensioned

		Fuel filter (candidate required only to state how to service the fuel filter): • fuel cap to be removed • filter to be located and removed from tank using an appropriate tool • condition of the filter determined; replacement if necessary • cleaning procedures include using non-flammable detergents followed by rinsing and drying
	5.3b. Describe the procedures for maintaining the power unit of the trimmer/brush-cutter (battery only)	To include: • inspect for security and damage – damaged equipment should not be used • external fixings present and secure • debris removed from fins/air intake
		To include: • inspection of cables and plugs • cleaning guide tracks and terminals/connections on charger • Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) testing charger • clean air intake and battery connections • no sparks or naked flames during battery charging • away from a heat source • battery to be disconnected prior to maintenance
5.4	Describe the procedures for maintaining the cutting heads	Angle drive and gearbox: • access plug removed • lubricant checked • lubricant topped up (if appropriate)
		Sharpen brush-cutter blade: • gloves worn when handling brush-cutter blade • remove blade guard • secure blade using appropriate method (locking pin, spanner etc) • loosen and remove retaining nut (L/H thread) • remove blade assembly • check the blade for length • check the blade for damage • secure the blade for filing (any acceptable method used) • blade sharpened correctly (blade template used if appropriate) • blade balance checked • blade re-checked for cracks/damage • drive shaft and collar cleaned • blade refitted, washer and lock replaced securely
		Remove trimmer head and refit new cord or nylon blades: • secure nylon head using an appropriate method • remove retaining nut Remove casing and comment on the condition of: • casing • ferrules • retaining nut • check cord or blades for damage • refit existing or new cord or blades (as appropriate) • refit nylon head

		• refit washer and nut and secure appropriately • nylon trimmed to recommended length
5.5	5.5a. Describe the procedures for making adjustments to the trimmer/brush-cutter (fuel only)	May include: • adjusting the engine idling screw (if applicable) • adjusting the fuel mixture (if applicable)
		To include: • handlebar adjustment as necessary • moving/adjusting harness connection point
		To include: • length of shoulder straps • length of side straps • position of chest plate • position of hip guard • correct working height and balance achieved
	5.5b. Describe the procedures for making adjustments to the trimmer/brush-cutter (battery only)	To include: • handlebar adjustment as necessary • moving/adjusting harness connection point To include: • length of shoulder straps • length of side straps • position of chest plate • position of hip guard • correct working height and balance achieved
6.1	6.1a. Carry out pre-cutting tests (fuel only)	To include: • remove and retain guard (brush-cutter) • correct starting procedure for the machine (on the ground) • start machine, check controls are fully operational • ensure blade or head is stationary at idling speed • machine stopped using on/off switch • check Operator Presence Control (OPC) is operational
	6.1b. Carry out pre-cutting tests (battery only)	To include: • remove and retain guard (brush-cutter) • correct starting procedure for the machine (on the ground) • engage power trigger • ensure cutters are stationary when trigger is disengaged • machine stopped using on/off switch • brush-cutter guard replaced • check Operator Presence Control (OPC) is operational
6.2	Prepare the site to be cut	May include: • authorities informed about the work prior to commencement • warning signs erected • high-visibility clothing worn • an 'exclusion zone' could be set up • road or dual carriageway lane closed or coned off
7.1	Describe the different operating techniques for grassland and scrub	To include: • scything technique • swatting technique (brush-cutter) • direction of working to avoid clogging blade/head
7.2	Use appropriate operating techniques for the site being cut	To include: • safe working distance maintained at all times • plan work efficiently • blade speed appropriate whilst cutting • use legs and hips to work machine • cut vegetation using scything action

		• cut vegetation using swatting method • clear jammed blade safely (if this occurs) • vegetation cleared to specification
		To include: • safe working distance maintained at all times • plan work efficiently • nylon cutting cord/blade speed appropriate whilst cutting • use legs and hips to work machine • cut vegetation using scything action • renew or replace nylon cord/blade as appropriate • clear jammed head safely (if this occurs) • damage to obstacles avoided • vegetation cleared to specification
8.1	Store equipment appropriately and in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines	May include, to: • prevent corrosion • facilitate maintenance and adjustments • prevent personal contamination
		May include: • using appropriate PPE • removing unwanted residues using an appropriate method, which may include: ○ compressed air ○ hose and water ○ brush • waste disposed in line with company policy, environmental good practice and any legislative requirements
		May include: • machine inspected to establish if there are any missing, damaged or worn components • ensures that defects can be rectified before machine is required again for use

Appendix 1 Sources of general information

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. They should be referred to in conjunction with this handbook. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to **www.cityandguilds.com** or click on the links below:

Centre handbook: quality assurance standards

This document is for all approved centres and provides guidance to support their delivery of our qualifications. It includes information on

- centre quality assurance criteria and monitoring activities
- administration and assessment systems
- centre-facing support teams at City & Guilds/ILM
- centre quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

The Centre Handbook should be used to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Centre Contract.

Centre assessment: quality assurance standards

This document sets out the minimum common quality assurance requirements for our regulated and non-regulated qualifications that feature centre assessed components. Specific guidance will also be included in relevant qualification handbooks and/or assessment documentation.

It incorporates our expectations for centre internal quality assurance and the external quality assurance methods we use to ensure that assessment standards are met and upheld. It also details the range of sanctions that may be put in place when centres do not comply with our requirements, or actions that will be taken to align centre marking/assessment to required standards. Additionally, it provides detailed guidance on the secure and valid administration of centre-assessments.

Access arrangements: when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds

Provides full details of the arrangements that may be made to facilitate access to assessments and qualifications for candidates who are eligible for adjustments in assessment.

The **centre document library** also contains useful information on such things as:

- conducting examinations
- registering learners
- appeals and malpractice.

Useful contacts

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