

INTERIM ADVICE NOTE 172/13

Ash dieback – Chalara fraxinea

Interim Advice

1. Introduction

Ash dieback (*Chalara fraxinia*), is a fungal disease that has caused widespread damage to Common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) tree populations throughout Europe. It has now been identified in the UK on recently planted young trees and also older established trees.

Ash is a very common tree throughout the UK landscape, with a large population on the Highways Agency network. Ash dieback is particularly destructive of young ash plants, killing them within one growing season of symptoms becoming visible. Older trees can survive initial attacks, but tend to succumb eventually after several seasons of infection.

Evidence from Europe indicates that approximately 95% of the ash population will succumb to the disease. Given the large numbers of ash trees on our network there is a high probability that the management of this disease will impact upon the HA's projects, schemes, route and area operations. The Agency also has a requirement to play its part in helping Government's response to controlling the disease.

1.1 Legislation

Legislation came into effect on 29th October 2012, banning the movement of ash plants and seeds within the UK, with immediate effect.

The legislation:

- **Prohibits** all imports of ash plants, trees and seeds into Great Britain until further notice;
- **Prohibits** all movements of plant-passported ash plants, trees and seeds within Great Britain until further notice;
- **Permits** movement within Great Britain of all ash timber, which poses a very low risk of disease transmission.

1.2 Instructions for Use

The purpose of this Interim Advice Note is to guide the HA's operations and suppliers in the appropriate response to this disease. The IAN replaces the initial informal advice issued in October 2012. It is likely that this guidance will need to be updated in line with changes to Government policy. This document contains mandatory elements, in particular relating to statutory powers that have now been introduced to contain or eradicate the disease when it is found, including complying with the requirements of Statutory Plant Health Notices.

Action needs to be taken by the HA together with the supply chain, to undertake appropriate reporting of suspected signs of the disease, (whether in mature stock, but particularly recently planted nursery stock, up to 7 years old).

1.3 Actions for HA staff and supply chain

The agency's approach to managing the disease is to maintain a central register that records details of all suspected and confirmed incidents of the disease and actions taken on our land. This will be used by Netserve's Environment Group to report to the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA).

Actions in response to suspected infection:

- HA staff and supply chain staff, during the course of their normal operational duties, should be alert for signs of ash dieback on the agency's landholding, including both operational and non-operational areas (disease identification information can be found on the [Forestry Commission's website](#))
- If a suspected infection is found it should be reported immediately to the Highways Agency's Chalara mailbox, copying in the relevant HA service manager responsible for the part of the network affected. (when reporting to the mailbox, the information required can be found in annex A)

Note the HA Environment Group will then be responsible for notifying FC/FERA (no reports should be sent directly from the supply chain or other HA staff),

- Major Projects and Network Delivery and Development staff, and their supply chains, will need to respond fully to support the access of FERA/FC staff to the network to enable disease confirmation. This may include the provision of photographs and sample material,

Actions to help prevent disease spread:

- No ash trees should be planted or transported around the estate.
- When undertaking work on the soft estate, particularly around ash trees, HA staff and their suppliers should comply with the [Forestry Commission's biosecurity measures](#)
- Agency staff and supply chains must comply with any issued Statutory Plant Health Notice and report the outcome via the Highways Agency's Chalara mailbox

Actions to support tracking sources of the disease:

- FC/FERA may request information on HA planting schemes and access to the HA network as part of their investigation into the distribution of infected young trees. Major Projects and NDD should be prepared to receive and deal with these requests.

1.4 Relationship

There are no internal documents that relate to or precede this IAN (though informal initial advice was provided at the end of October 2012 – this is now superseded by this IAN). There are external documents which have been published by the Forestry Commission that should be read in conjunction with the IAN, and links to the current versions on the FC website are referred to within this document.

1.5 Implementation

This advice note takes immediate effect. Any actions placed upon the supply chains as a result of the provisions of this IAN should be treated in accordance with existing contractual arrangements

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Highways Agency service providers are responsible for complying with this IAN, applicable legislation and any requirements coming from FC/FERA or a statutory Plant Health Notice.

3. Contacts

Specific technical advice about management of ash dieback on the HA network is available from:

Peter Groutage, Senior Environmental Advisor
The Cube, Birmingham
0121 678 8208
6189 8208

4. Normative References

Biosecurity: Good working practice for those involved in forestry – Forestry Commission website - [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS028-guidance.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS028-guidance.pdf/$FILE/FCMS028-guidance.pdf)

General information on ash dieback is available from the Forestry Commission and FERA: www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara
<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/plantHealth/pestsDiseases/chalaraQAs.cfm>

SI 2012 No. 2707 PLANT HEALTH The Plant Health (Forestry) (Amendment) Order 2012

5. Contact Point and enquiries

Highways Agency's Chalara mailbox

Contact details for submissions to the HA central Chalara Register:

Chalarafraxinea@highways.gsi.gov.uk

All enquiries on this IAN should be sent to:

Standards_Feedback&Enquiries@highways.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A – HA’s Chalara register requirements:

HA staff or service providers must make a report to the HA Chalara register as soon as they suspect or become aware of a potential outbreak of the disease. They should endeavour to provide as much of the information below as possible and if safe to do so they should also provide digital photographs of the effected trees to help with diagnosis.

Regular updates to the register must be provided as more information about a suspected case becomes available during the diagnosis and disease control process.

Scanned/electronic copies of all statutory notices and official correspondence from FC/FERA must also be provided.

If HA staff and service providers are aware of existing cases of the disease on our network then information on these must be provided to the register retrospectively.

Date reported:

Location:

Area/Route:

Service provider person responsible:

Contact email address:

Contact phone number:

Project Type: **New build/Network Ops**

Grid Ref:

New Planting - under 10 years old: **Y/N**

Wider Environment: **Individual/Hedgerow/Coppice/Young Woodland/Mature**

Confirmation of Ash tree identification:

Other critical information:

Environment Group staff managing the Chalara register will contact service providers/reporters for further information as it becomes necessary.