

TOOLBOX TALK

BRIEFKIT

# Stump Grinding

A toolbox talk ready to deliver for foremen and supervisors. An 8 to 10 minute spoken script plus a briefing register for the team to sign.

REFERENCE	TBT-STUMP-GRINDING-001	DURATION	8 to 10 minutes
DATE		SITE	
TRAINER (PRINT)		SIGNATURE	

## 1 Why it matters

Stump grinding is covered by HSE guidance and current industry best practice, and the rules that apply to any powered machine apply here: trained operators, guards in place, and people kept out of the danger area. The wheel does not care what it hits. Buried metal, a flint, a chunk of old concrete, any of it can be fired out fast enough to badly hurt the operator or a passer by many metres away. Most of the harm from these machines comes from ejected material and from the public getting too close, and both of those are things we control before we start.

## 2 PPE required for this task

Helmet with visor and ear defenders (EN 397 / EN 1731 / EN 352)

Leg protection and sturdy work trousers

Close fitting gloves

Eye protection under the visor for fine debris (EN 166)

Safety boots with good grip (EN ISO 20345)

High visibility clothing on roadside and public jobs

### 3 What to say

*Spoken script for the supervisor. Read or paraphrase, in order.*

#### 1 Trained and competent, every time

Nobody runs the grinder unless they are trained and competent on that machine. It is not one you learn by having a go while the boss is on the phone. If you have not been shown this exact grinder and signed off on it, you do not start it, you find me.

#### 2 Check underground before you grind

Before the wheel goes anywhere near the ground, we check what is buried. Gas, electric, water, fibre and drains can all run right under a stump, especially near a house or a path. Use the plans and a cable locator, and if we are not sure, we do not grind. Hitting a live cable or a gas main with a spinning wheel is a very bad day.

#### 3 The exclusion zone is the whole job

The biggest danger is material being thrown out, so nobody stands in the firing line. Set out the guards, mats and screens the machine came with, and fence or tape a proper exclusion zone around the work. On a footpath or roadside that means barriers and a banksman keeping the public back. If someone walks into the zone, the wheel stops until they are gone.

#### 4 Guards down, screens set

The machine's own guards, deflectors and debris screens are there for a reason, and they stay in place and set correctly. Do not run it with a guard swung out of the way because it is quicker. If a guard is damaged or missing, the machine is off the job until it is sorted.

#### 5 Clear the stump first

Before you grind, clear the loose stones, the bits of old fence wire and the rubbish sat around the stump, because that is exactly what gets thrown. Give the ground a look for anything metal or hard that the wheel will fire out. A minute clearing up front saves the stone that comes back at you.

#### 6 Stable ground, feet clear of the wheel

Set the machine on stable, level ground and keep good footing yourself. Watch for slopes, soft ground and edges where the machine could slide or tip. Keep your feet and legs well away from the cutting wheel at all times. The wheel keeps turning after you take your hand off the control, so wait for it to stop before you go anywhere near it.

### 7 Nobody near the wheel while it turns

The only person by the machine while it is running is the operator. No one leans in to look, no one clears debris by the wheel, no one holds anything against it. When you need to move a guard, clear a jam or check the teeth, the engine is off and the wheel has stopped, every time.

### 8 The public are the ones you cannot control

Half these jobs are in front gardens, verges and pavements. People, kids and dogs will walk straight up if you let them, and they have no idea what a grinder throws. That is on us to manage: barriers, signage, a banksman, and stopping the moment anyone gets close. Assume they will not read the sign.

### 9 Noise, dust and vibration

It is loud, it is dusty and it shakes, so ear defenders and eye and face protection go on and stay on, and mind your hand arm vibration across the day. Wear a dust mask where the grinding is throwing up a lot of fine stuff. Take the breaks, swap the operator round, and do not grind all day solid without a rest.

## 4 Common mistakes to call out

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- Grinding without checking for buried gas, electric or water first
- No exclusion zone, so thrown debris can reach people around the work
- Running the machine with a guard or debris screen moved out of the way
- Not clearing stones, wire and rubbish from around the stump before starting
- Reaching towards the cutting wheel before it has fully stopped
- Letting the public walk up close on a path or roadside job
- Skipping ear, eye and face protection on a short job
- One operator grinding all day with no rotation or breaks

## 5 Watch on site this week

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*What the supervisor should be actively spotting on walk-arounds.*

- No underground services check before grinding near buildings or paths
- Guards or screens swung out of the way to grind faster
- No barriers or banksman on a footpath or roadside stump
- People standing in the line the debris is being thrown
- Loose stones and metal left around the stump before starting
- The operator's feet or legs close to the wheel
- Anyone but the operator reaching in while the machine runs

## 6 Confirm the team understood

*Ask one or two of these at the end of the talk.*

1. Before the wheel touches the ground, what do we check? (What is buried under the stump: gas, electric, water and comms, using plans and a cable locator, and we do not grind if we are unsure.)
2. Why is the exclusion zone the most important part of this job? (Because the real danger is ejected chips, grit and hidden stones, which can badly hurt the operator or a passer by well away from the machine.)
3. The grinder jams and you need to clear it. What has to happen first? (Engine off and the cutting wheel fully stopped before anyone goes near it.)
4. The stump is on a pavement with people walking past. How do we manage it? (Barriers and signage, a banksman keeping the public back, and stopping the machine the moment anyone comes close.)

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## Briefing register: Stump Grinding

All operatives who attend this toolbox talk must sign below. Their signature confirms they have heard and understood the briefing.

### Briefing delivered by:

<b>Name (print):</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Site:</b>			

### Attendees. I confirm I have heard and understood the briefing detailed above:

#	Name (print)	Company / Role	Signature	Date	CSCS / Ticket No.
1					
2					
3					
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12					

Keep this register in the site Safety File. Additional sheets may be appended if more than 12 operatives are briefed.

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