

Edinburgh City Council case study

Safety is the watchword for arborists and tree workers operating across the UK. Edinburgh City Council Forestry Manager Steven Webley, takes the safety of his forestry and arb teams very seriously, and has introduced Arb Aid's Trauma Kit, the UK's first arboriculture specific first aid kit to all worksites.

"As soon as I saw the Trauma Kit I knew it was the best I could provide for my teams. No one wants an accident, but the opportunity to have a professional first aid kit, and my teams trained to use the highly specialised field dressings, on every site in my area was an easy decision," said Steven. "A standard first aid kit – half a dozen plasters, a sling and a bandage, even with extra items like the large wound dressing – simply doesn't reflect the reality of potential injuries to my tree workers."

Forestry staff in Edinburgh work across woodlands, parks and urban greenspaces, carrying out a broad range of tree care and management activities, but Steven believes it is the vital first seconds after an accident that count, rather than minutes. "The potential for damage from a chainsaw incident is indescribable. Having specialist field dressings that stem bleeding fast with my guys trained to use them can make the difference between life and death," explained Steven. "I hope we never suffer a serious injury, but I'd rather know I've done everything I can than spend a lifetime thinking 'What if?'"

The Trauma Kit comes complete with military grade field dressings – designed to stem bleeding and protect wounds until an injured person can get to a medical facility. Uniquely the Trauma Kit comprises a three stage system for dealing with trauma and arterial blood loss. In the event of minor injury a work proof, waterproof finger bandage enables work to continue in safety.

Arb Aid has spent two years researching the needs of arborists and tree workers, before carefully matching them to the highest quality, and most usable, first aid kit. Every item comes carefully packed into the Trauma Kit's distinctive bright yellow, waterproof, crushproof box measuring just 30cm x 15cm x 18cm.

"Wherever my teams go they have the Trauma Kit, and its robust packaging means that whatever the conditions – inside the van or out," said Steven, "all components are clean, dry and ready to use."

Arb Aid's Director, Greig Sutherland, an arborist for many years, created the Trauma Kit after spending years trying to find appropriate first supplies, and then a consistently effective way to transport them to multiple sites. "There simply was no first aid kit that worked for me as an arborist. We all know the risks, and simply hoping that a serious accident was never going to happen didn't work for me," explained Greig. "As a first aid trainer I decided to lead by example. Arborists need one first aid kit, top quality relevant dressings, the training to use it, and simple re-ordering. Any item can be ordered simply

by texting Arb Aid – it's all part of the package. The integral Personal Locator Beacon adds a previously unthinkable level of security for lone and remote workers.

“Working on site now, seeing that bright yellow box, and understanding the potential injuries, my colleagues and I are more aware of the need to risk assess, and look after each other.”

In an era when health and safety, the provision of PPE and staff welfare is paramount, making the best first aid provision in an industry with inherent risk of injury must be a priority.

Steven summed up the Trauma Kit, and its impact: “Tree workers think nothing of spending £300 on chainsaw boots and trousers to protect themselves, but when it comes to first aid they have accepted what can now only be described as second best. The Trauma Kit is, to my mind, essential. Once I knew about it, nothing else was good enough.”