GRASS CUTTING & VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

General Guidance document

Purpose

A concise field guide for mowing, strimming and vegetation management around a small solar installation. It does not replace the site Safety Statement, task-specific risk assessment, RAMS, permit, environmental controls or equipment instructions.

1. Before Work Checklist

	Site induction completed and access authorised.
	RAMS reviewed, understood and signed by all operatives.
	Work permit or authority issued where required.
	Emergency contacts, exact address/Eircode, access details and assembly point available.
	Weather and ground conditions suitable. Do not work during lightning, flooding, poor visibility or on unstable ground.
	Full site walk-down completed, including slopes, holes, drains, debris, wildlife and soft ground.
	Cable routes, exposed or low cables, connectors, earthing and other no-go zones identified and marked.
	Modules, supports and electrical equipment visually checked before starting.
	Machine pre-use checks completed, including guards, interlocks, blades, tyres, brakes, fluids and controls.
	Exclusion zone established and gates secured. Banksman appointed for tight rows, blind areas, slopes or public boundaries.
	First aid kit, spill kit, suitable fire extinguisher, communications, drinking water and welfare arrangements available.

2. Safe Working Method

1. Secure access points and establish the exclusion zone.
2. Walk the work route and identify electrical, mechanical, ground and environmental hazards.
3. Remove stones, wire, glass and loose debris safely before cutting.
4. Use controlled manual trimming around cable rises, inverter plinths, fences and array legs.
5. Cut grass using the smallest suitable guarded machine and operate at low speed.
6. Keep discharge away from modules, cables, people, roads, buildings and electrical equipment.
7. Maintain defined stand-off distances and use a banksman where visibility or clearance is limited.
8. Stop work immediately if conditions change, equipment becomes defective or asset damage is suspected.
9. Complete a final asset inspection, photograph the completed work, report defects and sign out.

3. Mandatory PPE and Welfare

- Safety footwear with good grip.
- High-visibility, close-fitting work clothing.
- Suitable work gloves.
- Safety glasses, with face shield where brush cutting or strimming presents a debris risk.
- Hearing protection where the noise assessment requires it.
- Long sleeves and trousers where vegetation, ticks or plant contact may present a risk.
- Hydration, weather protection, hygiene, task rotation and breaks appropriate to heat, UV, rain, vibration and fatigue.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY RULE

Treat all PV cables, connectors, inverters, combiner equipment and AC plant as live unless formally isolated, locked

off, proved dead and released under an approved electrical safe system of work. Vegetation staff must never touch, move or repair electrical equipment.

KEY RISKS, STOP-WORK & COMPLETION

4. Key Risks and Controls

Electrical Damage | *Electric shock, arc, fire or fatal injury.*

- Maintain marked stand-off distances and use manual trimming around cable routes.
- Stop, withdraw and prevent access if damage, exposed cable, arcing, an electrical trip or burning smell is found.
- Contact the site authorised electrical person immediately.

Flying Debris | *Eye injury, body injury or module damage.*

- Clear stones, wire, glass and debris before cutting.
- Maintain the exclusion zone and direct discharge away from people and assets.
- Wear appropriate eye and face protection.

Machinery Injury | *Cuts, amputation, crushing or entanglement.*

- Use all guards, interlocks and safety devices.
- Follow the safe stop procedure before clearing, cleaning or inspecting.
- Never leave a running machine unattended.

Module and Asset Damage | *Electrical fault, fire risk and generation loss.*

- Operate at low speed and use a banksman in restricted areas.
- Never strim directly against cables, connectors, structures or earthing.
- Stop and inspect after any contact; photograph and report all suspected damage.

Slips, Trips and Rollover | *Falls, collision or crush injury.*

- Inspect ground conditions and mark holes, drains, side slopes and soft ground.
- Follow the manufacturer's slope limits; avoid unstable or waterlogged ground.
- Use rollover protection and a seat belt where fitted.

Weather, Noise and Vibration | *Loss of control, heat stress, hearing damage or vibration injury.*

- Monitor weather and suspend work during lightning or unsafe conditions.
- Maintain equipment, limit exposure time, rotate tasks and take breaks.
- Use hearing protection where required by the assessment.

Fuel, Fire and Environment | *Burns, vegetation fire, spill or pollution.*

- Refuel outdoors with the engine off and cool; remove ignition sources.
- Carry a spill kit and keep dry material away from hot engine parts.
- Keep fuel, chemicals and cuttings away from drains, watercourses and electrical plant.

5. Stop Work Immediately If

- Cable, connector, module, support or earthing damage is found or caused.
- Arcing, an electrical trip, smoke, fire or a burning smell is detected.
- A guard or interlock is missing, or machinery becomes defective.
- A person, animal or vehicle enters the exclusion zone.
- Ground, slope, visibility or weather becomes unsafe.
- Protected wildlife is at risk, a spill cannot be controlled, or work departs from the agreed RAMS.

6. Emergency Response

- Call 112 or 999 for an emergency and provide the site address/Eircode and access details.
- Secure the area and prevent others from approaching damaged electrical equipment.
- Do not touch a casualty or equipment until the electrical source is confirmed safe.

- Contact the authorised electrical person and site representative.
- For fire, raise the alarm and move upwind to the assembly point. PV can remain energised in daylight.
- Provide first aid within competence, protect drains during a spill, preserve the scene, and report every incident or near miss.

7. Completion Checklist

	Vegetation cut to the site-required height with no immediate shading risk.
	Inverter and transformer ventilation, isolators, labels and access kept clear.
	Access roads, gates, drainage, fire breaks and emergency routes clear.
	Cuttings not piled under arrays or beside electrical plant.
	Waste, tools, fuel and chemicals removed.
	Defects and near misses photographed and reported.
	Security restored, monitoring advised and site signed out.

Irish H&S Basis

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, including written risk assessment and Safety Statement duties, and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, as amended, including work equipment, PPE, noise and vibration. Verify current HSA guidance and whether the Construction Regulations 2013 apply to any wider scope.