



City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Handheld Leaf Blowers and Vacuums (0014-39)

Version 1.3 (June 2025)

Assessment Pack – Candidate Version

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.2 November 2017	Added TQT details Deleted QCF	Qualification at a glance, Structure Throughout
1.3 June 2025	Updated unit numbers	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 units and learning outcomes:

Unit 254 Handheld leaf blower or vacuum operations

1. Know how to carry out a risk assessment
2. Know the current health and safety legislation and environmental good practice
3. Demonstrate how to check and maintain the machine
4. Demonstrate how to operate a leaf blower or vacuum
5. Know how to carry out post operative checks
6. Know how to clean and appropriately store a leaf blower or vacuum

Endorsement

The assessment may be taken on the following machines:

950 Handheld leaf blower

951 Handheld vacuum

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 manufacture's operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Practical observation descriptor table

254 – Handheld leaf blower or vacuum operations

Activity number and description from check list		Assessment Criteria
1.1	<p>Carry out a risk assessment for task, site and machine in respect of leaf blower or vacuum operations</p> <p>To identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant hazards those at risk control measures 	<p>Candidate is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> point out the hazards specify who may be at risk suggest suitable control measures <p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flying debris bio hazards moving parts coming in contact with fingers/hands
1.2	<p>Ensure that the site is safe for the operation of a leaf blower or vacuum</p>	<p>Candidate is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk the site and remove or mark hazards 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 <p>Confirm either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the site is acceptable for the operation to take place <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the site condition is not suitable for the operation to take place without remedial action. In which case the candidate makes the site safe
2.1	<p>Outline the relevant Health and Safety legislation that underpins the use of leaf blowers or vacuums</p>	<p>May include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 – specified duties under the act as an employee The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – a risk assessment must be carried for all activities Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 – PPE must be supplied and worn Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – avoid manual handling where possible, use safe lifting techniques The Control of Vibrations at Work Regulations 2005 – to reduce the risk to health from vibrations Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 – requires that regular checks are made

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise at Work Regulations 2005 – hearing protection must be worn over 85db Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 – operation carried out at times to minimise the impact on wildlife
2.2	Identify appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for leaf blower or vacuum operations	<p>Unless otherwise stated in the manufacturer's handbook or operator's manual, PPE may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hard hat/helmet with full face visor face protection suitable eye protection ear defenders dust mask non snag clothing high visibility clothing safety footwear
2.3	Outline good environmental practice associated with leaf blower or vacuum operations	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of bio fuel/oils avoidance of spillage using a spill kit to deal with any accidental spillage carrying out clearance with consideration to the needs of wildlife composting of arisings on site
3.1	Describe the function of the controls of the leaf blower or vacuum and the meaning of safety decals	<p>To include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on/off switch vacuum/blow control choke throttle throttle lock primer bulb decompressor (if fitted) Operator Presence Control (OPC) (if fitted)
		<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the operator protection decals bystander protection decals
3.2	Identify the safety features of the machine	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all moving/hot parts to be guarded as defined in the operator's handbook
		<p>Safety precautions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Assessment must be carried out before operation of the machine site must be conformed as safe for the operation PPE must be worn at all times ensuring the safety of bystanders/public a minimum safe working distance as recommended by the manufacturer
3.3	Carry out pre-start checks to the power unit and attachments	<p>These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> condition of anti-vibration mounts inspecting the machine for signs of damage (including the vacuum pipe and any attachment(s)) inspecting the machine for loose components and fixings checking the oil level (if applicable) checking the fuel level fuelling the machine (if required)
		<p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no smoking/naked flames

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allowing machines engine to cool before re-fuelling avoiding contact with hot surfaces fuel topped up to correct level allowing for expansion any spillage is dealt with using the correct method
3.4	Test start the machine and ensure that it is operating correctly	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> safe starting procedure for the machine start machine check controls are fully operational machine stopped using on/off switch
3.5	Carry out routine maintenance in accordance with manufacturer's instructions	<p>Power unit and covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spark plug to be disconnected inspect for security and damage external screws, nuts and bolts present and secure debris removed from fins/air intake exhaust (muffler) is secure and intact debris cleared from intake pipe/fan <p>Service air filter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 close or protected) filter cleaned or new filter obtained (as appropriate) filter replaced and cover fitted <p>Service the spark plug:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if fuel rich – deposits dark brown to black if fuel weak – light brown to white engine cover and spark plug removed plug cleaned appropriately wear/damage assessed (replaced if necessary) <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gap size checked and set if necessary <p>Service starter recoil mechanism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>Fuel filter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

4.1	Carry out leaf or debris clearance in accordance with instructions or specification	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe starting • PPE worn at all times • safety of bystanders/public • work planned • efficient use of the machine • debris collected or blown to appropriate location for collection • machine emptied/debris collected
4.2	Dispose of arisings in line with operational and environmental requirements	Waste disposed in line with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • company policy/site or operational requirements • environmental good practice • any legislative requirements
4.3	Leave the site clean and tidy	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site left in condition as specified by assessor
5.1	State why post operative checks should be carried out	May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to establish if there are any missing, damaged or worn components • ensures that defects can be rectified before machine is required again for use
5.2	Carry out post operative checks on a leaf blower or vacuum	May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • machine inspected • description provided
6.1	Carry out cleaning of a leaf blower or vacuum	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning procedures carried out as recommended by manufacturer
		May include, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent corrosion • facilitate maintenance and adjustments • prevent personal contamination
		May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using appropriate PPE • removing unwanted residues using an appropriate method, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ compressed air ○ hose and water ○ brush • waste disposed in line with company policy, environmental good practice and any legislative requirements
6.2	Store a leaf blower or vacuum in an appropriate place	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • machine stored in an appropriate place after use

Appendix 1 Practical tables

254 – Handheld leaf blower or vacuum operations

Candidates are **not** permitted to use the checklist to work from when completing the practical tasks but may familiarise themselves with it prior to the observation. **All** criteria must be achieved.

Activity number and description		Achieved
1.1	Carry out a risk assessment for task, site and machine in respect of leaf blower or vacuum operations	
1.2	Ensure that the site is safe for the operation of a leaf blower or vacuum	
2.1	Outline the relevant Health and Safety legislation that underpins the use of leaf blowers or vacuums	
2.2	Identify appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for leaf blower or vacuum operations	
2.3	Outline good environmental practice associated with leaf blower or vacuum operations	
3.1	Describe the function of the controls of the leaf blower or vacuum and the meaning of safety decals	
3.2	Identify the safety features of the machine	
3.3	Carry out pre-start checks to the power unit and attachments	
3.4	Test start the machine and ensure that it is operating correctly	
3.5	Carry out routine maintenance in accordance with manufacturer's instructions	
4.1	Carry out leaf or debris clearance in accordance with instructions or specification	
4.2	Dispose of arisings in line with operational and environmental requirements	
4.3	Leave the site clean and tidy	
5.1	State why post operative checks should be carried out	
5.2	Carry out post operative checks on a leaf blower or vacuum	
6.1	Carry out cleaning of a leaf blower or vacuum	
6.2	Store a leaf blower or vacuum in an appropriate place	
Grade (P/X)		
Candidate signature and date		
Assessor signature and date		
Endorsement		
Assessor Feedback:		

Appendix 2 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

Please visit the Contact Us section of the City & Guilds website, **Contact us**.

City & Guilds

For over 140 years, we have worked with people, organisations and economies to help them identify and develop the skills they need to thrive. We understand the life-changing link between skills development, social mobility, prosperity and success. Everything we do is focused on developing and delivering high-quality training, qualifications, assessments and credentials that lead to jobs and meet the changing needs of industry.

We partner with our customers to deliver work-based learning programmes that build competency to support better prospects for people, organisations and wider society. We create flexible learning pathways that support lifelong employability because we believe that people deserve the opportunity to (re)train and (re)learn again and again – gaining new skills at every stage of life, regardless of where they start.

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