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SAFETY ALERT

06-S-3

WARMING FIRE BURNS LOGGING COMPANY EMPLOYEE

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BACKGROUND: On a winter morning in the Southeast, a logging company employee was attempting to build a warming fire at the logging site.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The individual was 48 years old and had been working in the woods for over 20 years. He was a utility man on the landing, responsible for moving trailers, trimming loads, etc.

UNSAFE ACTS: The employee poured a mixture of diesel fuel and some gasoline onto the small fire that he had started for warming to get it going better. (He had asked his employers for permission to start a warming fire. The owners of the operation denied permission, but the employee went ahead and started a fire anyway.)

ACCIDENT: As he poured the fuel mixture onto the existing fire, the fire kicked back and set the employee's clothes on fire. The employee then started to run, which caused the fire to intensify.



INJURY: Two other employees, both firefighters for their local fire department, chased the employee down and put the fire out (with the assistance of "Coldfire"). The employee was burned on over 70% of his body: 40% were third-degree burns, and 30% were second-degree burns. The employee was taken to a burn center to receive extensive, ongoing, long-term medical treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Warming fires should be discouraged at logging sites.
- If fires are allowed, they should be contained (i.e., in some safe type of burn barrel).
- A fire extinguisher should be readily accessible at any warming fire.
- Flammable or combustible liquids—including gasoline, chain saw fuel, or diesel fuel—should not be used to start a fire or to revive one.
- All employees should be trained in first aid, including how to treat burns until medical attention can be provided.
- Remember: “stop, drop, and roll”!

Reviewed by:

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Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.