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SAFETY ALERT

06-S-4

CHAIN SAW OPERATOR CUTS LEG WHILE DELIMBING

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www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/06-S-4.html

BACKGROUND: A logger was delimiting trees away from the loading deck on a hot summer day in the South.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The 23-year-old chain saw operator worked for a company that had an informal safety program that conducted occasional safety meetings. Although his company provided his personal protective equipment, including chaps, he did not wear chaps on this particular day.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION: The chain saw operator failed to wear all the appropriate PPE, failed to fully inspect a log before delimiting it, and straddled the tree instead of standing to one side of it.

ACCIDENT: As the chain saw operator straddled the tree, he did not see the limb that was pulled back and lodged under the limb he was trimming. When the limb he trimmed dropped, it hit the lodged limb. The lodged limb released, hit the chain saw, and forced it back into the operator's shin.



INJURY: The chain saw chewed through the operator's pants, cut a six-inch gash on his shin, and severed the tendons to his ankles. Seven month's later, after he recovered, he returned to work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- 1) Management should require, and ensure, that all employees who operate chain saws wear full leg protection with cut-resistant material, in accordance with OSHA regulations.
- 2) Fully inspect the tree before delimiting it.
- 3) Stand on one side of the log or the other. Do not straddle it.

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