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SAFETY ALERT

05-S-7

LOGGER CUTS HAND ON CHIPPER COUNTER-KNIFE

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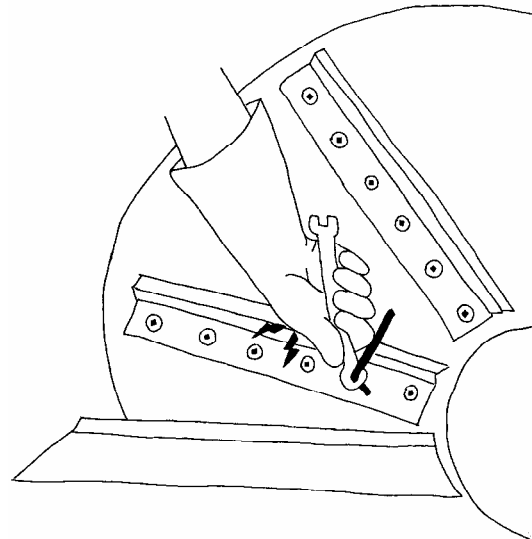
BACKGROUND: A logging business owner was changing counter-knives on his whole-tree-chipper on a cool, pleasant winter morning in the Southeastern U.S.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The 43-year-old logging business owner had been running a chipping operation for five years and had been involved in logging for approximately 10 years. He had experience working on chippers and logging machinery and was fully trained to handle all aspects of logging. He was wearing gloves.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION: There was not enough clearance inside the chipper to use an air wrench to loosen the bolts on one of the chipper counter-knives, and the owner did not have a tool on the job that could easily remove the bolts. He decided to loosen a bolt using an allen (hex) wrench with a box-end wrench slid over the allen wrench for leverage.

ACCIDENT: When the bolt suddenly loosened, the wrenches lurched quickly and unexpectedly, and the back of the logger's right hand was forced into the counter-knife.

INJURY: The counter-knife cut through the leather glove and partially severed a tendon on the back of his right hand between his forefinger and middle finger. He required hospitalization and stitches along with some physical therapy. The logging business owner was out of work for six weeks. He was able to return to operating the loader (his usual work function) after six weeks and was hoping for an eventual full recovery.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION: The business owner has since purchased a ratcheting tool that safely and more effectively removes the counter-knife bolts.

For added safety, consider placing a protective covering, such as a rubber strip or PVC pipe (slit lengthwise), over the counter-knife when loosening the bolts. Always wear gloves when working with chipper knives or counter-knives. Although the leather glove in this case did not prevent injury, it reduced its extent.

Reviewed by:
Rick Meyer
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Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.