



Discharged Board Fractures Lumber Grader's Eye Socket

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SAFETY ALERT • JULY 2023

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BACKGROUND

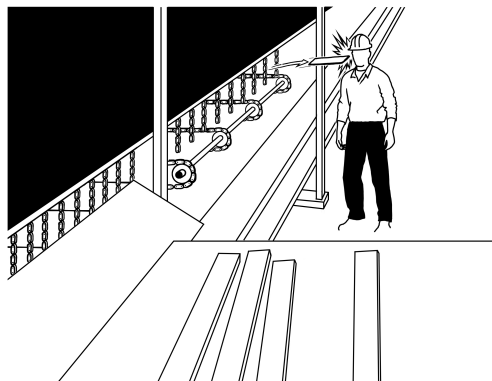
A lumber grader was working in the yard on a winter afternoon in the Southeastern US. The yard is separate from the two sawmills that are part of the business complex. All lumber is brought to the yard to a trimmer to be cut to length and stacked. The injured worker had been on the job for approximately four years when the accident occurred.

UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITIONS

The injured employee failed to follow company policy and did not maintain a safe working area.

ACCIDENT

On the day of the accident, the yard was processing 20 ft., 5/4 in. x 8 in. yellow pine. Any bark or inferior quality board ends were trimmed off during this process. If the board was knotty, it was cut into two 10 ft. boards for pallet stock. The outfeed chain at the facility was only 14 ft. long, so the second 10 ft. board would fall off the chain after it was cut. This process requires an employee to pick the board up and slide it back onto the chain. Company policy dictates that while this process is being used, the two lumber carts closest to the trimmer are to be pushed back, thereby allowing enough room for an employee to safely pick the boards up and return them to the chain. The lumber grader responsible for catching the boards and placing them back on the chain failed to push the lumber carts back far enough away to allow adequate space to safely retrieve the boards. While he was standing beside the trimmer, a 2 ft. piece of board stayed on the chain instead of falling into the block belt below. When the drop saw returned, the piece became pinched and was discharged from the trimmer. The projectile struck the lumber grader on the right side of his face. The business owner was immediately notified, and the injured employee was transported to a local hospital.



INJURY

Upon evaluation, medical personnel determined that the sawmill worker had a fractured eye socket, causing considerable swelling inside his eye. After an emergency procedure to cut the tendon behind his eye to accommodate the swelling, he was airlifted to a larger regional care center for further treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION

- Always maintain a safe working distance from operating machinery.
- Always follow safety practices and procedures for safe operations in dangerous working environments.
- Properly mark or post signage in all restricted areas.
- Adhere to a routine maintenance schedule to ensure deflecting chains and other safety devices are functioning properly.



This Safety Alert analyzes an injury in accordance with the chain of events represented by the five dominoes above. Pioneer industry safety experts H.W. Heinrich and Alfred Lateiner developed this accident analysis system to provide a graphic sense of how injuries can be avoided. Their methodology has been accepted by safety professionals worldwide.

Safety Meeting Report

Date:

Company:

Names of Employees Attending:

Topic(s) Discussed:

Comments / Recommendations:

Meeting Conducted by:

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

signature