

## SAFETY ALERT 01-S-24



### FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

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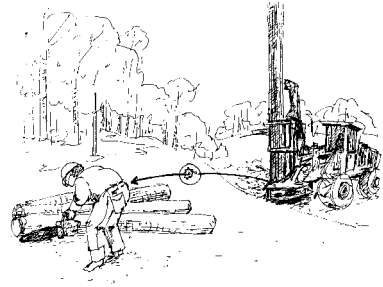
## SAWHEAD TOOTH STRIKES WORKER IN CHEST

October 2001

**BACKGROUND:** A sawhand was limbing and topping trees on a log loading deck one autumn day in the South. Another logging crew member was operating a feller-buncher with a disc sawhead down the hill from and out of sight of the logging deck.

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The sawhand and felling machine operator were trained and experienced workers.

**UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION:** Noticing a vibration in the sawhead, the operator shut down his machine, dismounted, and stood by it, waiting for the disc to stop turning. He intended to inspect the disc to see if one of the cutting teeth had come off the disc. Another crew member approached the operator from the direction of the loading deck to inform him that the sawhand had mysteriously collapsed.



**ACCIDENT:** An examination revealed that a cutting tooth had separated from the disc and had been discharged toward the deck, striking the sawhand in the chest. The tooth was found on the ground where the man had collapsed. It had struck his chest on his left shirt pocket. In his pocket were a small screwdriver and pair of glasses in a leather case.

**INJURY:** The sawhand suffered two broken ribs, a collapsed lung, a cracked sternum, and a bruised heart. He spent two weeks in the hospital.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Avoid working on the discharge side of disc saw felling heads, and remain at least 300 feet from operating disc saw machines.
- Be aware that the flight angle of sawhead discharge debris may be increased in rough or hilly terrain, and heavier debris may travel unusual distances.
- Avoid cutting when people, domestic animals, buildings, or easily damaged property are located on the discharge side of the saw, repositioning the saw as necessary. Design cutting sequences and work areas so disc saw debris is directed away from high-traffic areas.
- Following replacement or maintenance of saw teeth, be sure bolts are replaced and properly torqued. Follow all maintenance procedures and heed all cautions and warnings described in operator and service manuals when inspecting and maintaining disc sawheads.
- The machine operator correctly decided to shut down his machine and inspect the sawhead disc when he noticed the sawhead vibration, but he should have remained in the cab until the disc had stopped rotating.

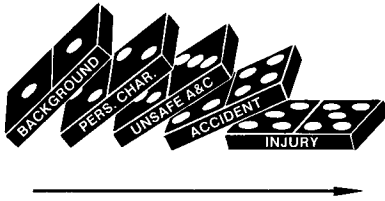
**STAFF COMMENT:** FRA has published several Safety Alerts concerning disc sawheads. For additional sawhead safety information refer to Safety Alerts *Sawhead Debris Puts Feller-Buncher Operators at Risk* (97-S-29); *Fatality Caused by Disc Saw Discharge Debris* (98-S-32); and *Ejected Sawhead Tooth Penetrates House Trailer* (01-S-15). FRA has also published a *Sawhead Safety* brochure (93-A-4), and has produced a short safety video on the safe operation of high-speed disc cutters called *The Cutting Edge of Safety* (01-A-4). Contact FRA at 301/838-9385 to obtain ordering information for these items.

*Reviewed by:*

Michael Wetzel

Southeastern Technical Division Forester

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



This Safety Alert analyzes an injury in accordance with the chain of events represented by the five dominoes at left. Pioneer industrial 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic(s) Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

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Names of Employees Attending:

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_____	_____

Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments / Recommendations:

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