



FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

600 JEFFERSON PLAZA, SUITE 350
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852

PHONE: 301/838-9385

FAX: 301/838-9481

LOGGER SERIOUSLY INJURED WHILE LIMBING

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BACKGROUND: A logger was limbing a large pine with a chain saw on a winter day in northern New England. There was approximately 16 inches of snow on the ground. The logger had planned for this to be his last tree of the day before going home.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The logger had seven years of experience and been fully trained under the state logger certification program. He was wearing all of the OSHA-required personal protective equipment.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITIONS: Due to the crowded stand conditions, the logger skidded the tree into the main skid trail prior to limbing. The trail was covered with ice and snow and was slippery. The logger may have been hurrying to finish before darkness set in. The logger recalls that he had not “locked” his thumb underneath the top handle while limbing, as he usually did.

ACCIDENT: While limbing the stem, the logger slipped on the icy skid trail and lost his balance. As he fell forward, his hand slipped off the top handle of the chain saw. He instinctively put his elbow forward to protect his neck and head from striking the running saw. His left elbow made contact with the moving chain. The entire incident occurred in less than two seconds.

INJURIES: The logger was hospitalized for five days and required surgery to repair the nerve and bone damage to his left elbow. He required a bone transplant from his hip and nerves from his foot to replace those lost in the elbow. Physical therapy was necessary after the surgery. The logger lost nine months of logging production and has yet to return to full-time work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- 1) When operating a chain saw, ensure that the thumb is “locked” under the front handle of the saw (as in Fig. 2)—never along the side or top of the handle.
- 2) Wear calked or studded boots on slippery ground.
- 3) Wear well-fitted gloves that fit snugly around the fingers.
- 4) Employ a heated handle system to encourage tighter gloves or mittens.
- 5) Test-run the chain brake by engaging it periodically throughout the day.
- 6) Plan accordingly to give yourself enough time to finish the last hitch before dark.



Fig. 1: Incorrect grip: thumb not “locked.”



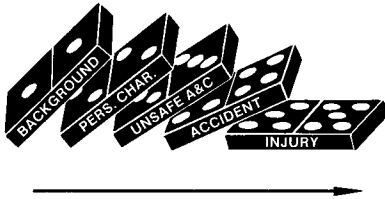
Fig. 2: Correct grip: thumb “locked.”

Reviewed by:

Patrick Hackley
Northeast 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: _____

Names of Employees Attending:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Conducted By: _____

Signed: _____

Comments / Recommendations:

