



# CHAINSAW VS THE HUMAN FOOT

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Forestry Mutual Insurance Company, 1-800-849-7788 (*Out of the Woods, Vol. 25, Issue 3, Page 33*)

The modern chain saw is an engineering marvel. Technology and design has allowed engine speed to exceed 15,000 RPM's on some production saws. Coupled with a razor sharp saw chain, the chainsaw is a very effective tool. The same power and sharpness came lead to serious injury. In spite of an ever growing mechanical presence in the woods, the chainsaw remains a necessity.

- In recent years, we have seen a rise of saw cuts to the feet. The first step to prevent these injuries is to make sure the saw engine and saw chain are properly tuned and maintained.
- The cutting tooth of the saw chain is designed to REMOVE!
- Saw chain doesn't cut like a filet or hunting knife.
- On a 3/8 pitch chain, the cutter is 3/8 of an inch wide.
- Contact the body and it takes 3/8 of an inch of skin; muscle; tendon and bone – they are gone!
- Add some foreign material, (bar oil, dirt, pieces of shoe leather, etc.) to the wound area and this injury becomes quite serious.

Next in the loss control process is to AVOID CONTACT with the saw.

- Chainsaw kick-back is the culprit in the majority of all laceration incidents.
- Chainsaw kick-back happens seven times quicker than the human brain can react.
- In the time a human can move a foot or shield a face, you are cut.
- Reduce kick-back injuries.
- Understand reactionary forces of the bar and chain – remember the kickback area.
- Use proper bracing and a "thumb-wrap" grip to counteract these reactionary forces.
- The chain brake should be treated like a safety on a firearm.
- When not cutting, the brake should be engaged to avoid unexpected chain movement.
- Proper body placement greatly reduces the risk of a serious laceration.
- If the foot is not in-line with the saw chain, it won't be injured there!

Wear proper Personal Protective Equipment, (PPE).

- Cut-resistant foot wear is federally mandated for saw hands. Chainsaw cut-resistant foot wear can prevent or greatly reduce the seriousness of a cut.
- Protective foot wear comes in many forms and styles and is quite comfortable to wear.
- It just makes good sense; it's like having extra insurance should a situation arise. As with any PPE, catastrophic injury can be prevented or reduced by its use.

However, the best tool is to train and educate to avoid having to rely upon the PPE for protection.

A chainsaw foot lacerations will be severe. Sometimes contact to the bone can occur which often requires bone-graft surgery. To avoid this possible crippling injury, use good work habits and proper PPE to reduce the chance of injury.

## 2015 Safety Meeting Record

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and signatures of ALL attendees to be attached.

Conducted by:(signature) \_\_\_\_\_