



Safetree Safety Alert

Post this alert on your workplace noticeboards. Discuss it at safety or tailgate meetings.

Type of incident: Run of leg/back injuries to breaker-outs from stems, stumps and ropes.

Date: 15 September 2017

From: FISC

Key points

- In the last three week's there's been a run of serious leg and back injuries to breaker-outs when stems, stumps or ropes have fallen on them.
- For contractors and crews, these injuries highlight the importance of good planning and communication. At the tailgate meeting make sure everyone knows the plan and what's changed.
- For forest owners and managers, these injuries highlight the need to ensure production pressures and adverse conditions aren't compromising safety.
- They're also a reminder that you need a well-practised emergency plan if someone gets hurt.

What's been happening

There have been at least four serious injuries in the past 2-3 weeks when breakers-out were hit by stems, stumps and falling ropes. These incidents resulted in broken legs (one breaker-out had both legs broken), back injuries and lacerations. In some cases, a good emergency response was the only thing that stopped someone dying.

Learnings

These incidents highlight the importance of the five critical defences against serious injury in forestry:

- Planning: for the block and for the day
- Communication: what's the plan, does everyone know it, is it working, has anything changed
- Separation: distance (2 tree lengths, safe retreat), or time (not doing work at the same time)
- Competency: people doing the work have the right mix of training/skills/ experience to do the job
- Emergency response – there is a well-practised response if anyone does get hurt.

They also highlight the need for forest owners and managers to keep in touch with contractors to ensure adverse conditions or production pressure aren't compromising safety.

More information

See Safetree's guide on running Tailgate Meetings http://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/safetree_tailgate_meetings-1.pdf or watch the video <https://safetreenz.wistia.com/medias/gjww7t50xs>.

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