

Safetree Safety Alert

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

Type of incident: Thinning to waste

Date: 2015

From: FISC/Scion

Learning Review

This Alert uses the Learning Review approach to understand how incidents happen. The purpose of a Learning Review is to learn and improve. The recommendations are focused on improving the whole 'system' (the way work is done in forestry) to prevent future incidents.

The focus of the review

This review was prompted by a silviculture worker being injured. A number of thinning incidents have been reported in the industry over recent years. This review aimed to identify broader insights and lessons to prevent injuries to workers when they are thinning to waste.

Lessons and insights

The following recommendations were developed with experienced thinners and industry representatives in response to this incident, and others that have occurred in silviculture:

- **Develop a proximity sensor to help people stick to the two tree-length rule:** This would alert people when a fellow worker was within the two tree-length range to prevent trees being felled onto other workers.
- **Explore ways to improve emergency procedures in thinning to waste operations:** A 'man down' device that sends alerts to other crew members if a worker is lying prone for a specific time would speed up emergency response times, increasing the chances of injured workers recovering. This is important because workers involved in thinning to waste often don't see fellow crew members for many hours at a time.
- **Use a Thinning to Waste Advisory Group to help develop a Best Practice Guide for Silviculture Operations:** This would remedy the lack of tailored silviculture best practice guidelines. Currently, thinning is covered under harvest felling in the ACOP. But this potentially creates confusion as there are differences in the way thinners and harvesters work. A Silviculture Action Group has been set up by FICA to address some of the issues which relate to this part of the industry.

Read the full report *Thinning to Waste* at <http://safetree.nz/safety-alerts/>