



ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

No. 17, September 2006

Unsafe tree-felling leads to death

What happened

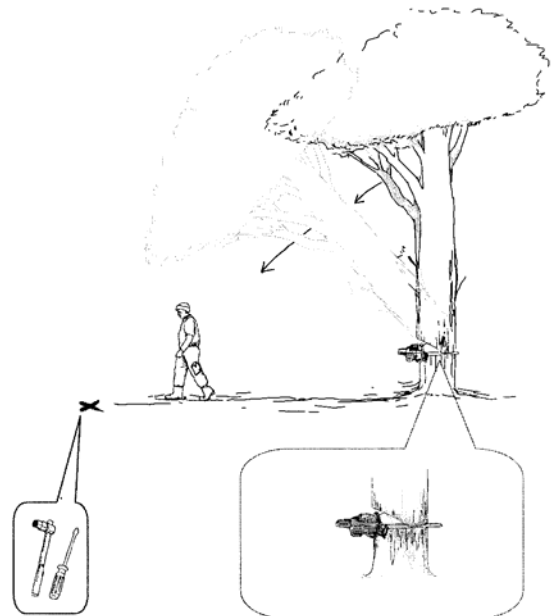
A firewood operator was killed when he was hit by a falling tree that had been poorly scarfed and back-cut.

He had been felling trees on his own. He had placed an oversized scarf (60% of the tree's diameter) into the tree causing the tree to lean backward as he made the back-cut, jamming the chainsaw. As he walked forward of the scarfed and back-cut tree to get his tools to remove the motor unit of his chainsaw the tree released and hit him from behind.

Investigation

A Department of Labour investigation found the following factors led to this accident:

- a bad tree-felling method
- use of a scarf greater than 60 per cent of the tree's diameter
- the victim walked forward of a cut-up tree in the direction of its fall
- the victim was felling alone with no emergency plan in place in the event of an accident.



Conclusion

The investigation found that the firewood operator did not have the skills or knowledge needed to fell trees safely.

Prevention

Before tree-felling make sure you have the knowledge and ability to fell trees safely, meeting industry standards.

Make sure you have emergency plans in place (such as someone checking on you regularly) in case of an accident.