



SAFETY ALERT

Chainsaw operator concussed

WHAT HAPPENED?

A fencer was tasked with clearing away deadfall under a shelter belt. This deadfall had been there since a big snow storm the previous winter.

The fencer looked at the task and assessed it as a simple 15-20 minute job.

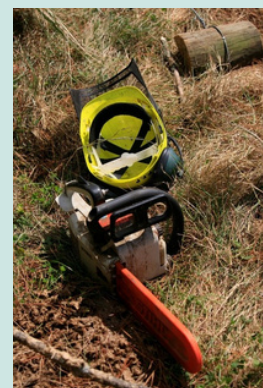
He had done similar jobs many times before.

The fencer put out cones to mark the area and put on the correct PPE, including a helmet. He was initially working alone but was only 250 metres from other workers in the stockyard. After making an initial cut he went back to the start of the belt to commence a second run.

As he was doing this he looked up to see a branch that had been hung up dislodge and fall towards him. Because he had not cleared away the debris from the first cut he had no escape route or freedom of movement. The helmet took most of the blow of the branch but he was still knocked out. Had he not been wearing his helmet this impact could have been fatal.

When he regained consciousness he continued on working. He did not stop work immediately and notify his manager. He soon began feeling signs of concussion.

He finished the job and went back to the yard. He later fell in the yard. This was the first time his co-workers knew he had been injured. The reaction of his co-workers followed the farm's emergency plans. However, they were unsure whether to activate the fencer's personal locator beacon (PLB) as well as call 111. The fencer was helicoptered to hospital for a CT scan and observation.



KEY LESSONS

- **Don't be complacent.** The fencer believes he was being complacent because the job was simple. This led to him not having a second worker on hand and not clearing away debris after the first cut.
- **Work in pairs.** A second worker should be on site for all chainsaw operations. In this case a partner would have helped with monitoring hazards, clearing lanes and applying first aid.
- **Freedom of movement.** Freedom of movement and identifying an escape route are fundamental to safe chainsaw operations.
- **Immediate reporting.** Any incident involving an injury should be reported immediately, and you should not continue working. Being injured puts yourself and others at more risk.
- **PLB activation.** The employee's PLB could have been used as a back-up to the 111 call.

Name: _____

Date Read: _____

SAFE FARMING STARTS HERE:

farmwithoutharm.org.nz/safety-alerts

