Chainsaw Safety Fatality Report

A worker was using a chainsaw to trim the ends off spacers used to separate layers of lumber in preparation for drying in a kiln. He was working alone although other workers were close by. He was not wearing protective clothing and there was no chain guard or anti-kickback device on the chainsaw he was using.

One of the spacers that he was cutting was apparently loose in the pile and the saw kicked back striking him on the right side of the neck. A deep laceration on his neck to the depth of his spinal cord resulted in death.

Chainsaws were once a tool used only by professional loggers, but it is now estimated that 90 per cent of chainsaws are sold outside of the logging industry.

A chainsaw should be treated like a loaded gun! Bystanders should always keep a safe distance from the operator. And the operator should protect himself as though he was at war!

Despite the fact that any chainsaw can be a killer, too many users ignore this fact and operate them in a careless manner.

Many owners even fail to read the safety tips in their operator’s manuals, and too often, when a saw is resold, the manual does not go with it. Most saws today incorporate several safety features that, when working properly, provide a good measure of safety for the operator.

Some chainsaw owners fail to wear personal protective equipment. They will even remove safety devices because they feel they “get in the way”. Too often the only thing that gets in the way is some part of their body.

All people using chainsaws both on and off the job, should take advantage of training programs and safety courses.