Manual And Powered Hand Tools – Landscaping Fatality File

Fatal Incident Involving Powered Hand Tools in Landscaping

On May 22, 2023, a fatal accident involving a powered hand tool occurred during a landscaping project in Seattle, Washington, resulting in the death of a 40-year-old worker, James Miller. Miller was using a powered hedge trimmer to cut dense foliage when the tool malfunctioned, causing the blades to jam and recoil violently. The force of the recoil caused the trimmer to strike Miller in the neck, resulting in severe lacerations.

Despite immediate medical attention from his coworkers and emergency services, Miller succumbed to his injuries at the scene. The investigation revealed that the hedge trimmer had not undergone proper maintenance and lacked essential safety features, such as a functioning blade guard. Additionally, Miller was not wearing the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), including a face shield and cut-resistant gloves.

Following this incident, the landscaping company has enforced stricter safety protocols, including regular maintenance checks for all powered hand tools, mandatory use of PPE, and comprehensive training programs for all employees on the safe operation of manual and powered hand tools.