

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This was a case of getting impatient and trying to hasten my recovery from a broken arm. While casted, all I could think about were the chores and projects backing up. A week out of the cast, while my arm strength was still below normal, I grabbed a chainsaw and began cutting brush. I lost my grip, and cut through the tendons in my left hand. More surgery, more bills, more chores backing up, and another six weeks in a cast.

Advice

Take time to recover fully before diving back in. The operating room staff all know me by name, folks at work are calling me BooBoo, and this year is a total write-off. Pete Northern Vermont

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

This happened back in the old days when I still did my own tree-trimming. I had a maple tree with a long limb that hung out over our property where it was in the way of other things we wanted to do there. I put my ladder up against the limb to be cut off. No,no, this was not so dumb as cutting the limb on the wrong side of the ladder, but almost. I only set the ladder a couple of feet longer than the height necessary to get it to rest securely on the limb. When I cut through the limb, it lost a LOT of weight, and rebounded up higher than the top of the ladder! I threw the chainsaw as hard as I could, and got it well clear of me. However, as the ladder and I fell toward the ground (I fell about 5-6 feet only) one of the rungs of the ladder slowed the rate of fall of the ladder by riding down my shin, which was by that time firmly planted on the ground. Very painful, though no permanent damage.

Advice

Think the situation through before you start any job.

Tool Type

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I tripped over a log with my finger on the trigger and fell backwards on the log with the saw running. It got my leg.

Advice

Don't move about the conjunction with fingers on the trigger.

Tool Type

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

My brother was cutting firewood by himself at the shop of the logging company he worked for. As he was sawing thru a log (Stihl saw with 30" bar) he hit what we later determined to be a spike driven into the tree. The saw kicked up extremely hard, rotating all the way back to come down on the top of his head, slightly on the right side. He was fond of baseball caps, and that was the only thing that saved him. The chain grabbed the hat as it rode down the side of his head, saving him from injury there, then chopped his neck 3 times before coming to rest on top of his shoulder. Took 130 stitches to sew him up, on top of having to drive himself to the hospital.

Advice

Always wear a hardhat or head protection when working with chainsaws; kickback can be severe. Try not to work by yourself in an isolated area with dangerous equipment, if you are injured severely, having someone close by could mean the difference between life and death.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

A friend of mine, a professional tree trimmer-cutter, had an accident about 10-12 years ago. He was dropping a tree from the top down since it was in a yard and partially overhanging a house. The top and limbs had been dropped and only the log remained standing. He was cutting the limbs into smaller pieces when the chain of the saw hit a piece of wire that was within the limb. It had apparently been placed there years earlier and then had been completely grown over. The saw kicked out of the limb, which was on the ground, and the chain hit his right boot. It cut through his boot and removed his big toe. A microsurgeon with a steel pin put it back on. Luckily he had insurance coverage to pay his medical bills and lost wages.

Advice

Use all protective equipment including a logger's helmet with face screen, hearing protection, leg chaps, and protective footwear. The minimum footwear should be ANSI rated steel-toed work boots. Better yet is logger boots that have Kevlar fibers in them like the chaps.

Tool Type

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

In 1978 a friend and I felled a medium sized gum tree. Once down, we were limbing the tree (it was in the 20's out). I guess the cold made me impatient, but my friend got the blade pinched in a branch when the trunk rolled. I reached down and pulled the branch back. When I did, the blade freed and the tip hit the trunk. The saw kicked back into the back of my left had, across the top of all four fingers. I needed nearly 1000 internal and external stitches, 3 steel pins (temporary) and a piece of lycra for an artificial tendon on the index finger.

Advice

NEVER attempt to free a pinched blade when the saw is running. Ideally, have the operator operate the saw and bystanders do something else. Like tote firewood.

Tool Type

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Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I have been cutting my own firewood for 24 years. But about 20 years ago I had cut down a Hickory and had just finished cutting it up. I cut the saw off and was walking slightly up hill, when my big feet got caught in some branches. I fell forward with the saw in my left hand, and the back of my hand facing forward. When the saw hit the ground, my hand jumped off the handle and the bar went between my ring and middle fingers. A drag or tooth cut a one inch long hole between the two fingers. I did have gloves on too. I could spread my fingers apart and look inside my hand. The doctor could only tape the fingers together until the cut healed.

Advice

You can never never be to careful when using a chainsaw.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

Back in my squandered youth, I used to cut a lot of firewood. One day I went to check the oiler on Stihl .041 by pointing it at the butt of log and goosing it. The saw twisted with the torque, caught the butt with the tip of the bar and the saw kicked back opening a 3" inch rip in my shirt where the left sleeve attaches. I set down the saw (turning it off on the way down!) walked into the house and found a barely perceptible scratch on my shoulder. Luck has followed my much of my woodcutting days, but now I've learned to rely on common sense.

Advice

Where as much protective clothing as you can safely work in! Know where your saw is at all times and where it could go. Avoid putting valuable body parts in the potential path of the saw if it kicks or hits something. If a cut looks risky set it up another way or don' make it, it's just NOT worth it!

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Working for a large university in the NW we were cutting up branches of a small oak tree that we had fallen the day before. It was rainy,cold and overcast that day. We were working 10 hour days and were exhausted. We were cutting fast and allowed the area to build up with debris. My partner was standing on wet, slick, branches. His foot slipped and the saw came down through his steel toed boot (the side). Took about 12 stiches in a toe, but could have been much worse.

Advice

Bad combination. exhaustion,weather, in a rush,not having a safe work area. We made our living working with chainsaws and thought we were safe.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was working on a logging crew for my father. We had just had an argument, and it was early in the morning. I was using a slightly longer bar on my saw than I was used to, and when limbing a tree and being distracted from my work by my anger, I failed to realize that I was cutting too much with the tip of my saw. It kicked sideways and took the skin and part of the flesh on the inside of my left leg down to the bone. It didn't require stitches because it scooped out all the flesh like a filet knife on a bluegill, but it hurt like crazy to get all the dirt scraped out of it.

Advice

A few things I avoid now: saws with bars longer than 16 inches for the small trees I tend to cut, working when angry or tired, and cutting anywhere near the tip of the saw if I can avoid it. The most likely time for a saw to jump and kickback is when the spinning end of the chain makes contact. Chainsaw chaps also would have saved me a trip to the doctor's office.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

CUTTING IN TOP OF TREE OVER HEAD PUT HAND UP TO STOP LIMB FROM COMING DOWN ON ME . CUT ARM JUST ABOVE WRIST 27 STICHES TO CLOSE CUT

Advice

WEAR ALL SAFETY GEAR AND KNOW ALL RULES

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Hurt but OK

Description

I was touching up the teeth on my Stihl 066 while it was sitting on the end of a 36"ish chunk that I had just cut off the end of a log. It was on my Mobile Dimension Sawmill ready to be sawn into lumber. Well the chainsaw was a bit too close to the end of that chunk and as I was filing the teeth, my force into the stroke with the file pushed the saw off the round and as it fell the tip of the bar swiped my midriff. It cut through my shirt and cut into my too soft belly. Upon closer inspection of the 4" cut, you could see where the tooth entered and exited leaving an L shaped cut that a buried saw tooth would leave. Surprisingly no blood and only butterfly bandages. It wasn't even running and it hurt me!

Advice

Make sure your saw is secure before filing teeth. Even though the saw isn't running, it can still hurt you.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

My father was cutting his annual winter firewood, about 2 miles from his house. The saw had not been running well, and to keep it from stalling, he kept the throttle lock on between cuts. He had just cut a small 10" tree and stepped back, holding the saw out in front of him to let the tree fall away from him. The small tree hit another previously felled tree and the trunk of it jumped up, hitting the bottom of the saw. The impact was sufficient to make him partially lose his grip. The rapidly spinning saw worked like a gyroscope and spun in his grip till the chain contacted him on his left arm. The blade cut from just above his elbow, down and around to just under his wrist, severing muscle, tendon, and several major blood vessels. He lived in a rural area and had to drive himself home, where my mother took over and rushed him to the hospital. Luckily our small town hospital just happened to have a neurosurgeon visiting and doing rounds that day. Several surgeries and much therapy later, he regained over 90% of the use of his arm and hand.

Advice

If the equipment isn't right, don't use it. Your saw needs to be tuned and properly maintained for it to do its job as efficiently and safely as possible.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

This happened to my good friend. He was clearing two damaged trees from his yard. He was anxious to get them cleared as his daughter was graduating high school that weekend, and they'd have a reception at the house later. When he trotted across the side walk to begin work on the second tree, he allowed the bar to hang down facing forward. He was going up a moderately steep slope. The bar tip hit the leading edge of the concrete resulting in a forceful kickback that swung the saw up and overhead. He held tight, the saw rotated backward and the bar came to rest in the crux of his neck and shoulder on his left side.

Advice

He had a Stihl 66, with a longer bar put on it (I don't know exactly how much bigger than the standard one, but almost twice as long). It was vastly oversized for the job and the terrain. Remember, weekends, holidays, birthdays, special occasions... they're not any more important than all the rest of your days to come. Don't rush, don't use equipment unsuited to the jobsite, and when moving on rough terrain, carry your chainsaw with your finger off the trigger and the break on.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I had been trimming all day long and had filled up and hauled off two 14x6 trailer loads of brush already. By this time it was already about 6:00 at night and I had been working since 7 that morning, so I was tired (1) and felt a little weak because I had not eaten anything since lunch (2), but instead of stopping for the day I decided to finish the last couple of trees. The customers wanted the particular line of trees that I was working on cleared a little higher to clear up the view and so of course I was up on a ladder (3). Well needless to say, the particular limb that I was cutting decided to snap before I was finished cutting and when it snapped it swung into me before I had time to engage the chain break. The next thing that I can remember is laying on the ground hearing the chain saw idling and trying to figure out what had happened. I felt no pain but looked down to see a cut running from the inside of my thigh to the left side of my knee cap on my left leg. Holding my leg together with my hands I ran or rather hobbled to the customer's house and they called for help. God was watching over me that day. This cut missed my knee cap by 1mm, the main artery that runs down the leg by about 3mm, and the femur by less than 1mm. The cut was approximately 14 inches long and the doctor lost count of the number of packs of suture that he used. Overall it has been a life-changing experience. I am much more aware of safety concerns and I always think through the cuts before I actually do them.

Advice

If you can get by without using a chainsaw then don't use it. No matter how skilled you think you are with a tool, it can still surprise you and teach you a little lesson. I had used chainsaws with my dad since I was about 12 or 13, but no matter how much you think you know it doesn't always count on it happening that way. Never use a chainsaw when you are tired, weak, or on a ladder. It is too dangerous and not worth risking your life for.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

The chainsaw we brought has a blade brake so it stopped immediately after releasing the throttle...but it got jammed without even cutting. So we borrowed the woman's STIHL saw that used to be her dead husbands. It was ancient. We put bar oil and gassed it up and it started right up. I was in a decent position and began to cut the tree. I cut through the tree and kinda moved the chainsaw down to my side, to set it down. (forgetting this one didn't have the brake) it hit my leg at almost full speed (right above my knee) I thought the tree hit it, I could barely feel it but then I looked down and blood was covering the bottom of my leg. The gash was about 2 inches deep and 5 inches wide. You could see bone. As stupid as I am, I RAN to my dads truck and applied an pressure wrap. He flew to the closest Hospital and had the ER doctor waiting for us. the doc took me back and clean it up and put another pressure dressing on it.....It was bleeding like crazy. THE DOCTOR THEN PUT ME BACK IN THE WAITING ROOM WHILE MY DAD DID PAPERWORK!!! I Lost a lot of blood and fainted (don't remember exactly). They then layed me down and numbed it. They sewed the inside with 8 stitches and the outside with 15 stitches. It almost hit the bone and almost hit the knee.

Advice

Please Know what you are doing. Know your chainsaw. And if need work done around the house that requires a chainsaw and have the money to get a professional, do it and hire one. It isn't worth the risk.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was clearing some brush, trying to get at the big tree I really wanted to work on. A small tree was holding up a large dead branch from the big tree. There was so much brush and leaves that I didn't see how much of the dead branch was being held up by the small tree. I took my Poulan 16" chain saw and started cutting down the small tree. Predictably, the large branch fell, and hit me square on the head, giving me a concussion. I dropped the saw and it went off automatically. Luckily it didn't hit me as I dropped it. I went to the emergency room, where the doctor told me that I was very lucky. If the branch had hit me on the neck or front of the head, I would have had spinal or brain damage. I was out of work for a few weeks to recover but since then I've felt ok.

Advice

1) Always make sure you know that what you're cutting isn't holding up anything else. 2) Wear a construction helmet when you're making cuts to a vertical object. Even a bike helmet would probably help. It's better than nothing.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Beginner

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

This was 25 years ago, but is still probably the most important tool lesson I have ever learned. I was 17 and had started a firewood business with two high school classmates. I was winter, cold and we'd been working all day. I felled a smallish oak and we were limbing it out. A small (couple of inch thick) limb "pinched" the bar around the chain. My friend was the operator. I reached down and pulled the limb back to release the pressure at the same time my friend pushed down on the saw. When the pressure came off, the tip of the saw contacted the tree trunk and it kicked back into the top of my left hand across the fingers. The index finger was effectively amputated and the "social" finger and ring finger were badly cut and broken. About \$10,000.0 worth of reconstructive surgery, God knows how many stitches, pins down the length of each finger and months of physical therapy later, I happily have full use of the hand. It even looks right. The index finger has almost full range of motion and only about a 15% loss of strength. I was incredibly lucky!

Advice

A chainsaw is a one man tool. Lack of communication about what each of us had in mind put us at cross purposes. More importantly, never, ever underestimate how fast a power tool can get out of control. You CANNOT move faster than it can. It was probably a bad idea to let three unsupervised teenagers use chainsaws in the first place, but honestly I can't say I wouldn't have done the same thing at 35 (absent prior experience). If you are going get inattentive with power tools, prepare to be hurt, work near a first class trauma center, carry the name of a really good reconstructive surgeon in your wallet and make sure your health insurance premiums are current.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

Hurricane Ivan had made a big mess of my yard. A number of large pines were down. I'm 59 and haven't used a chainsaw for years. I bought a new Husqvarna and also bought the Husky safety chaps and gloves. The weather was hot and humid and I was spending several hours at a time in the using the saw. I became fatigued. When I had finished some bucking I lifted the saw and the still-running chain come down against my left leg. The chaps saved me. The chain ripped right through the top layer of material but stopped when it contacted the next layer. I don't know what the chaps are made of but they saved my leg.

Advice

Wear all the recommended safety equipment when using a chainsaw. Get the chaps, chainsaw gloves, and the helmet with face shield and ear protection. Rest when you become tired. Don't get overconfident and careless. Think.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Beginner

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

The terrain was muddy, frozen and by no means easily navigated even on a skidder. After my "paul bunyon" buddy instruct's me in the art of felling a tree. he then proceeds to teach me the fine art of topping. so he is on one side and i am on the other. eye to eye, naturally him being anxious to show me how to hurry i soon found him getting to close for comfort. no problem i will just turn off the stihl AV.035 and back away.

i suddenly heard his saw shut down. he was screaming at me. He pointed down toward's my leg. i didn't notice anything so when i spotted what appeared to be a cue ball gleaming out from a gaping rip in the knee of my left pant's leg. i knew instantly what was up!

i released my belt buckle gave a yank and whipped the belt about 8" above the wound and fashioned a tourniquet.

we drove thru two barbed wire fences spun out out mutiple times in the truck on the way to the hospital, nearly ran out of gas we coasted up to the door.

the doctor wanted to put me to sleep. i never did fell any pain and the only pain reliever i was giving was about four tablespoons of dextromethorphen "cought medicine" he sutured a rip in/around my kneecap approximately 6 3/4" inches long it seem that the saw blade pulled all the excess skin up into the blade and ripped the ckin away from the knee cap itself very jagged.

Advice

never left any other person within a 6-8' radius of the saw.

never go out into the timber without communication's.

never work without a first aid kit available.

never work without proper safety gear and training.

allway's report any type injury to the proper authorities or thru your chain of command.

please try to make sure that there is at least two or more other workers at job site.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Beginner

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was in standing in my Weeping Willow tree cutting out some dead branches. One branch I cut started to fall towards my head. I reached up and pushed the branch away and out of the tree. The back of my thumb brushed slightly against the backside of the chainsaw. An inch long, 1/4 inch wide gash appeared on my thumb.

Advice

Never let go of a chainsaw until the blade is stopped.

Tool Type Chainsaw

Experience Beginner

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was working for my uncle pruning a tree. i had just finished the cut when lost my ballance and let go of the chain saw with one hand. as i began to turn, the chain managed to find its way to my leg. i ended up with 18 stitches and a bad scar. Being only 13, i was not paying attention and was injured.

Advice

make sure your chainsaw has a chain brake and if it doesn't, be extra careful.

Tool Type

Chainsaw

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

Sharpening Chainsaw - sharpening from the left side of the saw (sharpening the teeth that cut on the right side, I was twisting the file clockwise, the file climbed over the edge of the tooth and caught the knuckle of my right hand on the previously sharpened tooth - maybe the one before that - anyway, ripped a inch long gash across the first knuckle on my right hand - Ouch! bled like crazy, and is still healing after 3 weeks - everytime I bend finger the cut reopens - probably could have used stitches, but I'm a guy and you know how it is - tough it out - don't need stitches unless it has been completely cut off!

Advice

Always Wear Gloves when sharpening your saw! You never know when you might slip, and if you are sharpening correctly, the teeth will be wicked sharp on the corners when done. I still probably would have shredded my knuckle (and wasted a pair of gloves), though not to the degree I did and this would be healed by now. Pay attention!