

SAFETY ALERT 24/06

Chainsaw kick back.

High potential incident.

28 November 2024

MEMO TO ALL EMPLOYEES

Incident/Issue:

An experienced utility arborist was clearing a pile of slash in preparation for loading into the mulcher, when his saw kicked back and struck the brim and visor of his safety helmet. He was not injured.

Key findings:

- The saw had lost much of its sharpness and become loose due to use during the day, and the operator was having to force it to cut, rather than let the saw do the cutting.
- The position of the operator did not provide him a solid platform, and he was in line with the saw rather than offset. He was overreaching with arms bent rather than locked in, using the tip of the chainsaw to cut a small branch, and as a result, he has less control of the saw.
- This occurred near the end of the day, in hot, dry weather. Fatigue is a likely contributing factor to all the above.



Lessons learned:

This was a high potential near miss, and the last line of defence i.e., good quality PPE, did its job. The lessons from this apply to all workers, which are to ensure:

- Tools and equipment are maintained and checked both before and during the work.
- You are in the best work position to safely carry out the task. If needed, reposition until you are.
- Take regular rest breaks and hydrate.
- Take 5, reassess every task for risk, no matter how routine.
- Always wear PPE appropriate for the task.

Acknowledgement:

This incident was presented by the operator involved, at meetings with all Electra employees, ensuring the key lessons common to all work were shared.

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