



LESSONS LEARNED

Northern Region Safety & Occupational Health

21

June 2010

Eagle Trail IHC Saw Accident

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT

Sawyer assessed a tree that had fallen into two other trees and was suspended with a root wad, and hung in two other trees. The sawyer attempted to cripple the tree nearest to the tree that was root sprung. Sawyer then attempted to face the tree with a bird beak, hoping to drop the bole to the ground. The bird's beak was unsuccessful so, the sawyer attempted to picket cut the tree. When the sawyer cut the tree, the bole swung up in the air from the tree that the sawyer did not fully cripple. The tree pivoted towards the sawyer, striking the sawyer in the face, cutting the sawyers nose and bruising the sawyers shoulder and clavicle.



WHAT WAS DONE WELL

Communication from the spotter was effective. Escape routes and safety zones were assessed and adequate. All other personnel were more that two and a half tree lengths away. One tree was partially crippled which may have prevented a worse injury. IHC crew response time to the incident was fast, efficient, and effective. Sawyer was back-boarded to the river and transported via boat to a pick up location, and delivered to the Tok Clinic within 1.5 hours.

Contributing Factor:

The tree was still attached to the root wad, hung up midway by a smaller tree and hung up again near the top of another tree. Sawyer failed to fully cripple the middle tree sufficiently enough to prevent the middle tree from suspending fallen tree and pushing it towards sawyer. Sawyer was also cutting on the same side of the tree that he expected it to drop from the tree it was hung up in, hence compromising escape route; this was due to a large root wad that prevented the sawyer from cutting on the proper side.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sawyer(s), always have the right to refuse the risk and just walk away. When cutting a tree that is still attached to root wad there are unforeseen tension and binds causing the tree to act and react differently then a tree detached from the root wad. Make sure the size up is very thorough, you have good escape routes that are free and clear of debris, and ask for advice if you are unsure how the tree will react (root ball sitting back down, tree sliding, tree moving, etc...).

JOURNEY TO NO HARM