



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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File code: 6730

Date: April 17, 2005

Route to:

Subject: Expanded (72-Hour) Briefing  
Chainsaw Accident, El Cariso Hot Shot Camp, Trabuco Ranger District, Cleveland National Forest  
March 31, 2005

To: Tina Terrell, Forest Supervisor, Cleveland National Forest

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AN SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Name of injured or deceased (if the next of kin have been notified): Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew  
Member working on project crew

Preliminary factual findings:

Members of the Trabuco District project crew were cutting large rounds of pine and oak into smaller, manageable pieces for use at local District campgrounds.

Project crew members had transported several loads in different vehicles to the campground and one trip to get gas in the vehicle.

One of the crewmembers' saw ran out of gas so he stopped cutting and started loading more of what had been cut.

The sawyer who was later injured grabbed a saw off the crew buggy and began cutting rounds.

The sawyer cut about halfway through a pine round, turned it over and began cutting from the other side.

While cutting the round the sawyer moved the saw back and forth cleaning the cut when the tip of the bar came in contact with a large oak round immediately in front of the round he was cutting. The saw kicked back violently, striking the sawyer in the face, cutting into his upper and lower lip, and shattering his teeth. His safety glasses and his hard hat were also hit by the kick back of the saw.

The sawyer was wearing all the required PPE except he did not have on a long sleeve shirt.

Project crewmembers transported the injured sawyer to El Cariso Fire Station where he was treated by Riverside County Medics then transported by ground ambulance to the hospital.

The injured sawyer will have to have oral surgery to repair shattered and missing teeth.

The sawyer is currently certified as a C faller.

The rounds being cut ranged from 17 inches to 24 inches in diameter.

The incident was discussed with the sawyer at the hospital, however it was difficult for him to talk and he was on pain killers.

In a phone interview conducted on April 5<sup>th</sup> the sawyer said that he knew that the chain break was cracked before he started using it. He was not sure if the chain break had actually broke clean through.

The El Cariso Hot Shot crew captain stated that the folder with JHAs had been lost when the project crew switched crew buggies. He had heard the crew discussing JHAs the morning of the incident, but did not actually see them review anything. One of the project crewmembers stated that the crew was complacent in the work they were doing as it was just bucking up a pile of wood. The same project crew member stated that the previous week the crew had been clearing a trail of a large oak tree when the tree fell on the saw breaking the chain break. He had put the saw in the buggy without tagging it.

The accident scene was secured and a local investigation team was formed. At 1030 hours on April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Team met to begin evaluating the incident.

William Bourbeau  
Safety Officer

Narrative:

/s/ Team leader

cc:  
Safety Manager (at the level authorizing the investigation)



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