



# LESSONS LEARNED

Northern Region Safety & Occupational Health

July 2011

## Not the Right Chaps

**SUMMARY OF INCIDENT:** An employee was working on a slashing project and lost his footing while cutting a 2- 3 inch tree. The slip caused the chainsaw to hit the sawyers left leg and cut the saw chaps and as well as the sawyers leg. The employee cut two more small trees after the slip then noticed he was bleeding from a cut that resulted in 3 stitches. He removed his chaps and pants and found he had cut his leg. The ground was wet and slippery moreover the slope was about 30° plus. The sawyer was trained on saw usage and was wearing the chaps that were issue to him. The chaps failed in the fact that they did not stop (bind) the saw as intended. The chaps were not approved by the Forest Service standards 6170-4F. The crew did not receive the new regulations regarding chaps “*All we heard was that we needed to wear orange chaps*“. The chaps were orange and purchased from the local saw shop but were light weight. The employee’s boots could have also contributed to the slip as the sole of the boots were worn smooth.

**WHAT WAS DONE WELL:** The crew administrated first aid and got the injured medical attention right away. The crew was very engaged in the Lessons Learned and accident/incident process.

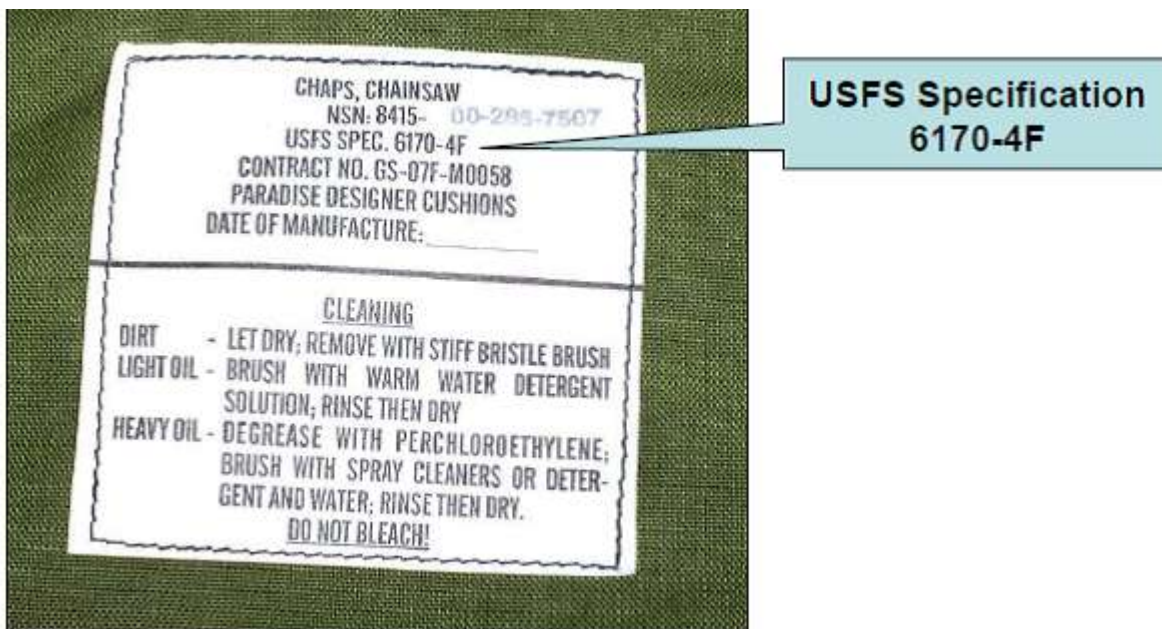
**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:** The steepness of the slope required good foot and body position for power saw operation, communications, proper PPE (chaps), and where to find up to date information. As well as proper boot soles for forest working conditions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The crew boss suggested that any new regulations be widely distributed. For example, make poster to put up around the office. Update policy’s and guides in a timely matter and placed where they can be found.
- Be sure that all employees are wearing the proper PPE in good working conditions from head to toe.
- Through evaluation of the work site. Terrain and vegetation should be taken into account, as well as the steepness and if there is wet, unstable grounds before starting work. “Every day is a new day and a new hazard to abate”.
- Put out a Safety Alert on the chaps as others have been found.



- Take the time to learn from incidents by doing reviews and investigations.
- Only purchase chaps from GSA catalog or Fire Caches.
- Inspection of all chaps forest wide to make sure they are the right chaps.
- Communications is very important. When policy and guides change handbooks, standards and training need to be changed so employees can find it and understand the reason. As of this date this has not been done, only email and one alert in 2009.
- Be sure to make Purchasing Officers aware of the standards.
- Good communications are essential at all levels when there are changes and updates for proper PPE usage and protection of our employees.



Be sure the tag has the standard 6170-4F