Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Chainsaw Cut

Date: August 21, 2019

Location: Pagosa Ranger District Project Work; Pagosa Springs, Colorado

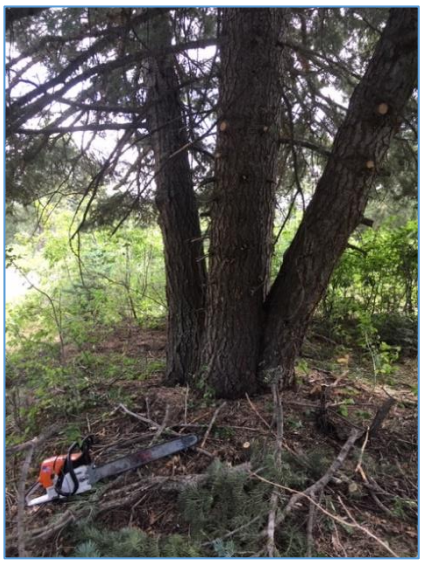


Photo on left is an example of the trees with the low-hanging limbs that were being cut and removed in the project area. Photo on right shows the accident site.

Narrative

On August 21, the Engine 641 crew was working with Crew 6 to remove low-hanging limbs and adjacent ladder fuels from standing white fir trees. Engine 641 was working as a crew composed of one sawyer (FAL3) operating the chainsaw and two swampers (FAL3 and FAL2).

Once the sawyer had cut the limbs, the two swampers worked together to remove these cut limbs out of the sawyer's way and pulled the limbs out from under the base of the tree for dispersal. The crew had noted it was a tight space working beneath the base of the tree and had mitigated this limited space by chaining out the cut limbs for scattering away from the base of the tree.

Two other teams of sawyers and swampers were also working in the project area. It was also noted that the tree canopy was dense and shaded and much darker under the base of the tree.

The patient's laceration was 5.5 inches long and ½ inch deep. The laceration missed major vascular components by approximately one inch.

Chainsaw Strikes Swamper's Left Forearm

At approximately 1555 the sawyer cut through a heavy live white fir limb. The weight of the limb as it fell pulled the bar of the chainsaw down and the chainsaw bar and chain struck the swamper's left forearm, causing a deep laceration which started to bleed immediately. The sawyer called for help and was immediately assisted by a crewmember who applied a belt as a tourniquet to control the bleeding.

Additional personnel were present to assist and were able to gather additional medical supplies. A manufactured tourniquet was

applied, the belt was removed, and an Israeli Bandage was placed over the wound. Once this bandage was secured, the tourniquet was loosened and the wound was assessed for continuation of bleeding, of which there was none.

The patient's laceration was noted to be approximately 5.5 inches long and ½ inch deep. The laceration missed major vascular components by approximately one inch.

During first aid care, radio contact was made with Dispatch at approximately 1556, informing them of a medical emergency and requesting ALS ambulance. The 8-Line medical form was utilized to provide necessary information to Dispatch.

The Israeli Bandage is a specially designed first-aid device that is used to stop bleeding from hemorrhagic wounds caused by traumatic injuries in pre-hospital emergency situations. The bandage was invented by an Israeli military medic, Bernard Bar-Natan. The bandages were nicknamed "Israeli Bandage" by American soldiers and have been "the bandages of choice" for the U.S. Army and Special Forces.

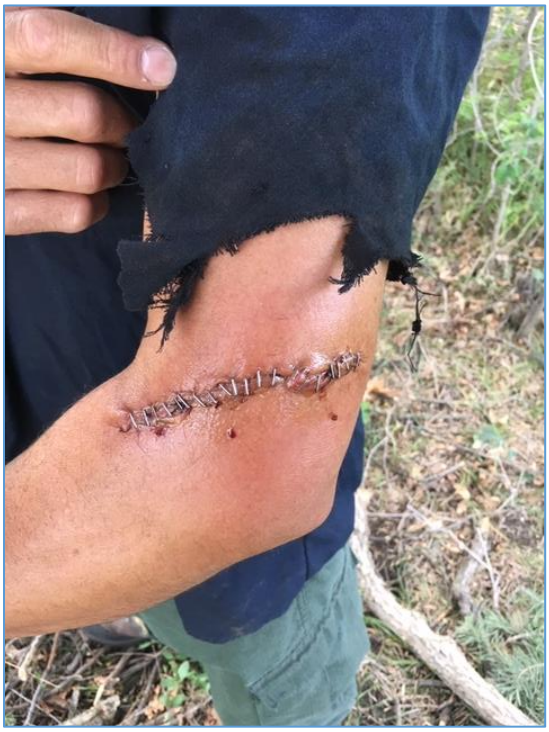
Incident Timeline

1557 – Incident Commander for this Incident within an Incident was identified and relayed to Dispatch.

1602 – Patient was packaged into crew vehicle and transport began to meet with ALS unit.

1608 – Patient was assessed by Pagosa Fire Engine 1 and ALS unit.

1624 – Patient was transported to Pagosa Medical Center via ALS ambulance.



Swamper's arm with the 21 staples used to close the wound.

Lessons

Medical Training

Both Crew 6 and Engine 641 have undergone advanced medical training and the execution of first aid. This patient's care benefited these personnel having this medical training. Engine 641 personnel had also undergone a locally developed "Stop the Bleed" training in the spring of 2019 and had been extensively trained in tourniquet use and placement, as well as Israeli Bandage use and placement.

Patient Care

Medical supplies were available for the treatment of this injury due to the proximity of the vehicles on the project. The timeframe for the patient's treatment was immediate due to the location of the accident site. All personnel involved felt that the patient care was provided quickly and efficiently.

Life-Saving Trauma Bandages

All crewmembers discussed the importance of always having life-saving trauma bandages and equipment on their person when engaging in project work. It's one thing to have gear on the truck, but it's another thing to have the gear on your pack right there at the work site.

Communication with IC

After initial triage has been communicated and first aid treatment has been initiated, ensure any changes in the injured person's condition—positive or negative—are clearly

communicated to the IC. This will assist outside resources who are responding and provide them a clear picture of the current status of the injured individual.

Working Near Sawyers

Personnel discussed the need to always respect the sawyer and provide sawyers more space than seems necessary—to provide for the continued safety of the individuals working with the sawyer.

Practice the 8-Line

Continued practice with the 8-Line is important for efficiency during a medical emergency.

Identify Helispots

It is important to identify helispots to visiting resources, even for project work, in case a need for emergency medical evacuation should arise.

This RLS was submitted by: Rebecca Elmore, Engine Boss

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