

SAFETY ALERT

FELLING DEAD SPAR

November 2016



ACCIDENT BRIEF

A faller scarfed and back cut a dead spar, his attempt to drive it down failed and for some unknown reason he went off to carry out another job, leaving the dead spar still standing. On returning to the felling face he has decided to by-pass the dead spar and he has walked slightly forward and to the side of the dead spar to fell another tree some 7metres away. When the tree hit the ground we believe the vibration of the tree hitting the ground caused the dead spar to fall.

The dead spar fell towards the faller striking the faller on his back.

The emergency services were called and the faller had to be air lifted to hospital.

THE FALLERS INJURIES WERE

- Fractured vertebrae
- Fractured ribs
- Fluid on the lungs
- Shattered pelvis
- Fractured shoulder
- Bleeding on the brain
- Fracture femur
- Fractured ankle

WHAT WENT WRONG

- *The faller was working forward of a scarfed and back cut tree (dead spar)*
- *The faller should have got the dead spar on the ground before felling any other trees*

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTION IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS?

- Can a machine safely access to assist or fell?*
- Can you safely fell this tree using the conventional method?*
- Are you able to select and use a tree or trees to safely drive onto the dead spar?*
- Or is it in the too hard basket, call for assistance (a second opinion, observer or another experienced faller) and isolate the area*
- If you still have doubts, discuss it with the foreman and contact your Ernslaw One supervisor*

FOLLOW THESE STEPS WHEN FELLING DEAD OR BROKEN TREES

- Take your time to correctly assess your tree and to consider your options*
- Standing on the safe side, insert a scarf. Make the scarf slightly deeper than normal*
- Watch the top of the tree when putting in the scarf.*
Be aware the tree may fall at any time
- Check the condition of the sawdust – is there sign of rot?*
- Once the scarf has been cut, remove the scarf wedge and check it for rot*
- Start the back cut*
- Insert your wedge firmly into your back cut, do not drive the wedge hard (the tree could fall or material could be dislodged as it is jarred or vibrated)*
Keep looking up as you insert the wedge
- Complete the back cut and retreat up your escape route*
Keep looking back and up at the tree as you retreat

REMEMBER

Dead spars should be felled, before the trees around it are felled

Do not turn you back on any scarfed and back cut tree

When doing a tree drive

- *Check in before starting and*
- *Check out after you have finished your drive*

REMEMBER THE KEY CAUSES OF HARM & THE TREE FELLING PLAN

7 KEY CAUSES OF HARM

- Fallers working too close to people/plant*
- Incorrect/poor felling techniques*
- Broken limbs/tops hitting the faller*
- Hang ups left standing/not using correct methods*
- Stem movement/rebound & butt swing*
- Felling dead trees*
- Faller being struck from behind*

5 STEP TREE FELLING PLAN

- Site assessment*
- Individual tree assessment*
- Prepare work area/escape route*
- Use safe felling techniques*
- Retreat and observe*

