

Safety Alert

Large Splinter lodged in Thin to waste operators' arm

Description of Incident:

As the operator moved between trees his foot slipped on pine needles. His foot continued to slip down a small drop off (60cm). Whilst he fell forward and trying to regain his balance, his left arm hit a small branch he had just trimmed. The branch pierced his skin and a large splinter approximately 40mm long by 7mm wide and 2 mm thick broke off and lodged in his forearm.

The operator received medical treatment to remove the splinter. He returned to work the following day.

Major Cause:

Ground conditions

- Small drop off concealed by needles
- Dry conditions combined with rolling to steep terrain contributed to slippery under foot conditions
- Visibility of surrounding area slightly affected whilst pushing and cutting through undergrowth

Learnings:

Watch foot placement and be aware of your surroundings.

• What worked well during this incident:

- The team always had radio communication with each other and responded to the call for help quickly.
- The operator was working near an experienced operator
- The operator with only 3 months thinning experience followed their emergency procedure well
- The crew did well to get the injured operator to the doctors quickly and efficiently.

