

SAFETY ALERT

Tree Faller Seven Harms, 'Butt Rebound'.

There has been a serious incident where a Tree Faller has had a felled stem rebound and slide back towards the felled tree stump, striking the fallers chainsaw. The Tree Faller had followed his five steps and was clear of the stem rebound.

Key learnings

- Ensure that a plan of the felling direction for the setting is established, agreed upon, understood and constantly reviewed.
- Ensure you have an escape route cleared at an angle to the felling direction. Finish the back cut on the safest side. Watch the tree as it falls. Move away from the tree stump as the tree falls.
- Avoid felling trees across raised ground, uphill, over ridges & spurs, obstacles such as rocks, through tight gaps in between standing or fallen tree stems and striking standing uncut trees and spars. Avoiding these situations will minimise the risk of butt rebound.
- If the wind direction and or strength starts to have a negative impact on tree felling direction and placement stop and reassess, either move to a better location or stop felling.
- Environmental constraints do not take priority over tree faller safety.

HFM NZ is grateful that the contractor reported this near-miss incident so that we can all learn and improve our manual tree felling operations.



Fallen stem and stump viewed from the retreat line. The butt of the stem has rebounded and come to rest 1.5m past the stump. The chainsaw was struck by the rebounding stem in the location shown by the chainsaw in the photo.