

LOGGING/FORESTRY SAFETY SERIES

CHAINSAW SAFETY

Photo credit: Cornelis F. de Hoop, PhD

Incident Summary:

Earle, a new log truck driver, arrived at his last logging site of the day around 4:00 p.m. It was a comfortable, sunny day in early June. Earle waited in the cab while his trailer was loaded with hardwood. When loading was complete, Earle pulled up onto the logging road and engaged the parking brake. He grabbed a chainsaw from the truck and starting de-limbing his load. Earle stretched upward, using the tip of the saw to remove a small branch. The chainsaw kicked back and Earle lost his grip. Earle suffered a severe laceration to his right arm and a less serious cut on his left arm. The right arm was amputated about six inches below the shoulder. The left arm was saved, but Earle lost about 25% use of that arm. He was not able to return to work.

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Earle do wrong?
2. Could this accident have been prevented?
3. What are the ramifications of this accident?

Take Home Message:

Only experienced loggers should operate chainsaws.

To avoid chainsaw kickback, do not saw with the tip.

Use proper equipment.

