

'Kickback Incident Resulting In Head Injury'

Within the last week an arborist received a head injury following a 'kickback' from an Husqvana360 whilst cutting through dense undergrowth.

Whilst cutting a branch of approximately 75mm in diameter, the nose of the chain bar mad contact with a smaller branch positioned behind the piece being cut. The secondary touch resulted in a change in chain velocity causing a 'kickback'.

As the saw jolted backwards, the chain brake was activated, but with the motion his helmet came off and the chain hit him in the head resulting in a wound that required 3 stitches.

You will all appreciate that this event could have had far more serious consequences.

Contributory Factors Leading To The Incident

- The work was being carried out on a particularly cold morning.
- The individual was wearing a foresters helmet compliant with BS EN 14052 that does not have a chin strap unlike climbing helmets that comply to BS EN 12492.
- The individual (due to the cold) chose to wear a woollen hat under his helmet that resulted in it not fitting tightly enabling it to fall off during a sudden movement.
- This was observed on the jobsite.



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Preventative Measures

- Working in cold and wet weather in an occupational hazard for all involved in arb work.
- Whilst it is important to keep warm, this must not compromise safety.
- It may be appropriate to consider the use of helmets with chin straps for everyone one working on the contract, but this must be risk assessed by each individual and company.
- If means to keep warm are required, the use of a helmet manufactures' recommended 'Thinsulate' type helmet liner be used –the example below costs less than £10.
- If a helmet liner is worn, ensure that the headband of the helmet fit snugly and that the helmet is not able to fall off easily.
- Ensure as far as practicable that the ground is level and that any unnecessary brush and brambles are removed to minimise trip and stumble hazards.
- Assess the work position and be aware of potential hazards that could cause kickback including embedded wire fencing, nails, surrounding branches and proximity hazards such as barbed wire and sheep fencing.
- **This incident could have been far more serious with potentially fatal consequences – ENSURE ALL PPE is worn correctly at all times – your life may depend on it.**

