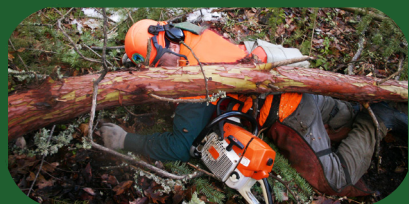


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# FOREST WORKER SAFETY TALKS

Available in Spanish  
[http://deohs.washington.edu/pnash/forest\\_safety](http://deohs.washington.edu/pnash/forest_safety)



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# SAFETY TALKS FOR FOREST WORKERS

Experience shows that regular, short safety talks are effective ways to keep you and your workers focused on safety and to prevent injuries on the job. These “Safety Talk” materials provide stories shared by forest workers about their experiences. Using personal stories to start a conversation about safety practices and prevention is a good way to get workers talking and thinking about safety issues.

In addition, Oregon OSHA (Division 7 Rules: 437-007-0200) requires that employers hold pre-work safety meetings with employees before starting any work in the forest at each new site where they will work more than one day. You should explain the emergency medical evacuation plan, identify hazards at the site, and arrange workers so they do not harm each other.



## Why short safety talks work

- An informal setting makes it easier for workers to get involved.
- Communication between workers and supervisors leads to problem solving.
- They are brief and focused on the work at hand.
- They demonstrate that the supervisor supports and encourages safe work practices.

## Why start with a personal story

- Stories help people get emotionally engaged in the topic—they pay attention.
- Workers are more likely to ask questions.
- It encourages workers to share their own stories, and apply what they learn to their own experience.
- Sharing stories builds trust between co-workers and with you.

## Tips for conducting a short safety talk

- Keep it short.
- Do a safety training when starting a new job or using new materials or tools, not after the new work has started.
- Get workers involved in talking about the topic.
- Training that involves listening, discussion and hands-on learning works best.
- Use the safety talk as a way to problem solve with your workers.
- Set a good example and show you really care about their safety.

# WORKER INHALES HERBICIDE

## 1 Introduction

Use this story to have a conversation with your workers about:

- How an injury can affect them and their family.
- Why it's important to know about the chemicals you work with.
- What protections are needed when working with chemicals.
- The procedures to follow if they get hurt.

*"Today we are going to talk about why it's important to know about any chemicals you work with, and to know what the requirements are for being protected from them. We will start with the experience of one forest worker and how his illness could have been prevented. This story was shared by a forest worker in the Northwest U.S."*

## 2 Share Story [See back](#)

## 3 Conversation questions [Ask 2 or 3](#)

- ***"What problems do you see in this story?"***
  - No training about the chemicals
  - Worker was not given protective gear
  - The crew was pressured to work too fast
- ***"How could this injury have been prevented?"***
- ***"Have you experienced anything like this? How can this type of injury affect you personally?"***
- ***"Does anyone know what our procedures are if someone is injured on the job?"***



## How could this injury have been prevented?

**You must be trained if you use any kind of chemical. You should be trained about:**

- How the chemical gets into your body. (skin/eyes, breathing, mouth?)
  - How the chemical can affect your health. (Rash? Dizziness? Nose bleed? Difficulty breathing? Nausea? Some kinds of chemicals, including some herbicides, can lead to cancer or other long-term health problems.)
  - What protection is required for the chemical being used. (Gloves? Eye goggles? Respirator or mask?)
- Employers are required to provide the protective gear listed on the label.

**Read the label. The label is the law. Every chemical container must have a label that describes how to safely handle the product.**

## Handle pesticides safely.

- Before using, check the equipment for leaks. Clean and check again at the end of the day.
- Wash your hands, forearms and face before you eat, drink, smoke or rub your eyes.
- If you have cuts or skinned places, check with your supervisor. You may need gloves or waterproof bandage.
- Make sure you and your co-workers are not downwind of the spray.

## 2

## Share Story

## Read aloud or share photo story

*"I was spraying with a pump and didn't have protection. The chemical started coming in through my nose and mouth. I started getting a headache right away. I asked the supervisor for a mask, and he said he would ask the boss.*

*I was short of breath and started getting dizzy. We were working fast because they were pressuring us to get finished so we could drive home. I felt a lot of pressure because the faster people were behind me. Like, to push me more. I told my supervisor that I felt really sick about 20 minutes later. Nothing was done.*

*After that I was too sick to work. I missed 3 days of work. I didn't get any medical treatment. My family was worried because I'm alone here. I'm the one who supports my family. They should give us training if we are using chemicals. They should give us masks to protect us. They didn't do anything for me and never came back to me to work for them after that."*





I was spraying chemicals with a pump and didn't have protection for my mouth and nose.



Can I have a mask?

I will ask the boss later.

I started getting a headache right away.



I feel dizzy and sick.

We need to finish so we can drive home.

I felt a lot of pressure because the faster people were behind me, to push me more.



After that I was too sick to work. I missed 3 days of work. I didn't get any medical treatment.



My family was worried because I'm alone here. I'm the one who supports my family.



Here is the kind of mask you need to wear when you use this chemical.

They should give us training if we are using chemicals. They should give us masks to protect us.

## How could this injury have been prevented?

### **You must be trained if you use any kind of chemical. Training should include:**

- How the chemical gets into your body. (skin/eyes, breathing, mouth?)
- How the chemical can affect your health. (Rash? Dizziness? Nose bleed? Difficulty breathing? Nausea? Some kinds of chemicals, including some herbicides, can lead to cancer or other long-term health problems.)
- What protection is required for the chemical being used. (Gloves? Eye goggles? Respirator or mask?) Employers are required to provide the protective gear listed on the label.

### **Read the label. The label is the law. Every chemical container must have a label that describes how to safely handle the product.**

### **Handle pesticides safely.**

- Before using, check the equipment for leaks. Clean and check again at the end of the day.
  - Wash your hands, forearms and face before you eat, drink, smoke or rub your eyes.
  - If you have cuts or skinned places, check with your supervisor. You may need gloves or waterproof bandage.
  - Make sure you and your co-workers are not downwind of the spray.
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# FELLED TREE DROPS ON CO-WORKER

## 1 Introduction

Use this story to have a conversation with your workers about:

- How an injury can affect them and their family and why it's important to stay attentive.
- What employers and workers can do to prevent injuries from falling trees and branches.
- The procedures to follow if they get hurt.

*"Today we are going to talk about safety practices to use when thinning trees. We will start with the experience of one forest worker and how this injury could have been prevented. This story was shared by a forest worker who works in the Northwest U.S."*

## 2 Share Story [See back](#)

## 3 Conversation questions [Ask 2 or 3](#)

- ***"What problems do you see in this story?"***
  - No training
  - Crew members not paying attention to each other
  - Supervisor allowing workers to work too close together
  - No stretcher available
- ***"How could this injury have been prevented?"***
- ***"Have any of you experienced anything like this? How can this type of injury affect you personally?"***
- ***"Does anyone know what our procedures are if someone is injured on the job?"***



## How could this injury have been prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Assess the site before starting work.
- Hold a pre-work safety meeting with the crew about the site.
- Keep crews spread out. Work at least two tree lengths apart when felling trees.
- Identify and mark dead and leaning trees as hazards or eliminate them.

### Pay Attention

- Check trees for dead branches. Look up, look down, look all around.
- Do not turn your back on a falling tree.
- Plan an escape route.
- Keep track of where your co-workers are. Do not bunch up.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
- Watch out for each other. Communicate about hazards you see.

## 2

## Share Story

## Read aloud or share photo story

*"It was morning and we had been thinning trees for a couple of hours. There were workers in front of me and behind me. The worker next to me was not paying attention and didn't notice where I was. He cut a tree and it dropped on me. It hit me and I fell to the ground. My saw hit me in the chest and my foot was twisted.*

*I could not get up. Two workers had to help me. No stretcher was available. I was in a lot of pain. My boss said they should take me to the hospital. My co-workers thought that would be too expensive, but the boss explained that that's what workers' compensation is for. Not all bosses will do that. At the hospital, I found out my foot was broken, and I had some fractured ribs.*

*I wish my co-worker had been paying attention. You can't be thinking about other things. We need to get reminded about what to watch out for, how to stay focused.*

*It was a year ago, but it still hurts. I can't play ball and run with my kids."*

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It was morning and we had been thinning trees for a couple of hours.



The worker next to me was not paying attention. He cut a tree and it dropped on me.



I can't walk. I think I broke my foot.



The hospital is going to be expensive!

It's ok. That's what the workers' compensation insurance is for.

My foot was broken, and I had some fractured ribs.



Pay attention to where your trees are going to fall. Be sure to work at least 2 tree lengths apart.

I wish my co-worker had been paying attention.



It was a year ago, but it still hurts. I can't play with my kids.

## How could this injury have been prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Assess the site before starting work.
- Hold a pre-work safety meeting with the crew about the site.
- Keep crews spread out. Work at least two tree lengths apart when felling trees.
- Identify and mark dead and leaning trees as hazards or eliminate them.

### Pay Attention

- Check trees for dead branches. Look up, look down, look all around.
- Do not turn your back on a falling tree.
- Plan an escape route.
- Keep track of where your co-workers are. Do not bunch up.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
  - Watch out for each other. Communicate about hazards you see.
-



# WORKER INJURED ON A WET STEEP SLOPE

## 1 Introduction

Use this story to have a conversation with your workers about:

- How an injury can affect them and their family and why it's important to stay attentive.
- What employers and workers can do to prevent injuries from slips and falls.
- The procedures to follow if they get hurt.

*"Today we are going to discuss how to prepare for working in slippery, wet, steep terrains. We will start with the experience of one forest worker and how this injury could have been prevented. This story was shared by a forest worker in the Northwest U.S."*

## 2 Share Story See back

## 3 Conversation questions Ask 2 or 3

- ***"What problems do you see in this story?"***
  - No training
  - Working in the dark
  - Inadequate boots
  - Medical care not provided immediately
- ***"How could this injury have been prevented?"***
- ***"Have any of you experienced anything like this? How can this type of injury affect you personally?"***
- ***"Does anyone know what our procedures are if someone is injured on the job?"***



## How could this injury have been prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Wear good work boots (caulks). Workers should not be allowed to wear improper footwear.
- Supervisor should assess the site before starting work, wait if it's too dark to work.
- Hold a pre-work safety meeting with the crew about the site.
- Warm-up and stretch before doing strenuous work.
- First aid at site requires a stretcher or litter.

### Pay Attention

- Don't work off balance. Find a stable position so you can control the saw.
- Engage the chainbrake while changing position, walking or climbing over obstacles
- Turn sideways to walk up or down steep slopes.
- Make sure you have 3 points of contact when stepping over things.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
- Saw cuts need to be treated by a doctor immediately, not just with first aid.
- Watch out for each other. Communicate about hazards you see.

## 2

## Share Story

## Read aloud or share photo story

*"We started working around 6am on a steep, wet, slippery slope. It was still kind of dark. It was foggy and raining. I couldn't see very well. I had the saw going. As I was going to cut a small pine tree, I slipped and let go of the saw. It fell on my foot and cut my toe.*

*I told my supervisor about the cut right away. They wrapped it up, but then I had to wait. At the end of the day, they took me to my house. My wife took me to the clinic but since it was 8 hours after I cut my toe the doctor could not give me the stitches that I needed. He said it was too late for that and was only able to give me antibiotics to prevent infection.*

*I feel that we should have waited until it cleared up a little. It was several days before I could go back to my job. My wife is now worried and wants me to look for another job. She's afraid that something worse will happen."*

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We started working around 6 am.



I couldn't see very well. I slipped and let go of the saw. It cut my toe badly.



They wrapped up my foot. I had to wait many hours before they took me home.



Here are some antibiotics to prevent infection. We could have stitched this but too much time has gone by.

My wife took me to the clinic.



Let's wait until it's a little lighter. Remember, walk sideways on steep slopes. Make sure you are stable before you start to cut.

I feel that we should have waited, so we could see better.



Sweetheart, I am worried about you getting hurt again. Please be careful.

It was several days before I could go back to my job.

## How could this injury have been prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Wear good work boots (caulks). Workers should not be allowed to wear improper footwear.
- Supervisor should assess the site before starting work, wait if it's too dark to work.
- Hold a pre-work safety meeting with the crew about the site.
- Warm-up and stretch before doing strenuous work.
- First aid at site requires a stretcher or litter.

### Pay Attention

- Don't work off balance. Find a stable position so you can control the saw.
- Engage the chainbrake while changing position, walking or climbing over obstacles
- Turn sideways to walk up or down steep slopes.
- Make sure you have 3 points of contact when stepping over things.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
  - Saw cuts need to be treated by a doctor immediately, not just with first aid.
  - Watch out for each other. Communicate about hazards you see.
-



# WORKER INJURED FROM CHAINSAW KICKBACK

## 1 Introduction

Use this story to have a conversation with your workers about:

- How an injury can affect them and their family.
- Why it's important to pay attention when working with a chainsaw.
- How chainsaws need to be maintained to prevent kickback.
- The procedures to follow if someone is hurt.

*"Today we are going to discuss how to prevent kickbacks from chainsaws. We will start with the experience of one forest worker and how this injury could have been prevented. This story was shared by a forest worker in the Northwest U.S."*

## 2 Share Story [See back](#)

## 3 Conversation questions [Ask 2 or 3](#)

- ***"What did you notice in this story?"***
  - Worker had all the right gear: Hard hat, chaps, gloves, boots, eye protection.
  - Worker let tip of saw touch the wood.
  - Worker didn't understand what caused the kickback.
- ***"How can kickback be prevented?"***
- ***"Have you experienced anything like this? How can this type of injury affect you personally?"***
- ***"Does anyone know what our procedures are if someone is injured on the job?"***



## How can kickback be prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Supervisors should show workers how and why kickback occurs.
- Maintain your saw. If your chain is dull or the depth gauge is too high, kickback can happen more easily.
- Inspect your saw before starting work. Make sure safety guards on the chainsaw are in place, and the chain brake works.
- Wear the proper protective gear, including hard hat, face shield, ear protection, chaps, gloves and boots.

### Pay Attention

- Find a stable position so you can control the saw. Don't work off balance.
- Maintain a solid grip on the front and rear handles at all times.
- Always be aware of where the tip of the bar is. Don't let the tip of your saw contact anything – this causes kickback.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
- Watch out for each other and communicate about hazards you see.

## 2

## Share Story

## Read aloud or share photo story

*"The terrain was steep, with a lot of slash and standing dead pines. The foreman told us to be careful. I was taking down trees. I was cutting a tree, and when I started cutting, the saw jumped back on me and cut my head.*

*I just remember that I ended up on the ground and a coworker saw all the blood and called to the foreman. I was taken to the doctor by my supervisor about an hour later. I ended up with 25 stitches. I didn't expect it. My saw was in good shape. I have had chainsaw classes but it is not the same until you have experience.*

*My head still hurts and sometimes burns and stings especially when I bend over. I wake up with a headache in the morning. I haven't been back to work. My daughter was afraid of me, the way I looked. My wife worries about me."*

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The terrain was steep, lots of dead pines.



The saw jumped back on me and cut my head.



I just remember I ended up on the ground.



I was taken to the doctor by my supervisor about an hour later. They gave me 25 stitches.



## How can kickback be prevented?

### Be Prepared

- Supervisors should show workers how and why kickback occurs.
- Maintain your saw. If your chain is dull or the depth gauge is too high, kickback can happen more easily.
- Inspect your saw before starting work. Make sure safety guards on the chainsaw are in place, and the chain brake works.
- Wear the proper protective gear, including hard hat, face shield, ear protection, chaps, gloves and boots.

### Pay Attention

- Find a stable position so you can control the saw. Don't work off balance.
- Maintain a solid grip on the front and rear handles at all times.
- Always be aware of where the tip of the bar is. Don't let the tip of your saw contact anything – this causes kickback.
- Don't hurry. Don't compete with your co-workers.

### Take Care of Yourself and Each Other

- Take rest breaks. We make more mistakes when we are tired.
- Watch out for each other and communicate about hazards you see.