Lessons Learned

Cut by Chainsaw

“An employee was using a chainsaw to cut brush in a grader ditch after trimming limbs off the tree. The employee forgot to engage the chain brake while walking up the hill; he tripped and his one hand brought the saw to full speed and his hand landed on the chain. This Kevlar glove saved him from a very serious injury that may have resulted in many stitches, amputation of fingers, severe infections, or the total loss of the hand altogether.”

“I am now a firm believer in these Kevlar gloves, and they are now a requirement in tree trimming. I hope others can learn from this very close accident we experienced.”

—Submitted by an Electric Superintendent of a member utility

The Lesson

Anytime you use a chainsaw, wearing protective gear is required. This gear also includes head, face, and hearing protection.

Kevlar chaps, gloves, and vests are designed to stop a chainsaw running at 3,140 feet per minute. When a running saw comes in contact with the gear, the outer layer is immediately cut through, but the inner fibers are drawn out and wrap around the chainsaw’s drive sprocket. This creates a solid lock and halts the running chain completely – thereby limiting injury to the wearer’s hand.

Once this happens, the personal protective equipment need to be replaced, and the saw must be field-stripped to remove the fibers and resume function. The replacement costs are definitely better than the alternative.