

Rapid Lesson Sharing

Event Type: Chainsaw Chain Catch Failure Injury

Date: July 27, 2021

Location: Bear Creek Fire, Minnesota

Have You Inspected Your Chainsaw's Chain Catch Recently?

While clearing a helispot on the Bear Creek Fire, a sawyer was bucking/limbing a spruce tree when they threw the saw's chain. The saw's chain catch, designed to help reduce the risk of operator contact by a chain when it breaks or comes off of the bar, failed—resulting in the chain missing the chaps and striking the sawyer's inner right thigh (see photo).

The chain's teeth tore through the sawyer's flame resistant pants into the sawyer's leg, resulting in a small laceration measuring one-inch long and just over 1/16th inches deep.

The chain catch failed when its plastic insert snapped off from the interior (see photos). The chainsaw, a Stihl 036 Pro, has the chain catch mounted to a plastic insert instead of directly to the crank case.

The sawyer was treated by an EMT who was on a crew assigned to the fire. The injury was treated on scene with antiseptic and gauze. The sawyer was able to return to work.



Photos show how the thrown chain just missed the sawyer's chaps and penetrated through the flame resistant pants, causing a small laceration on the sawyer's inner thigh.



Photos show the broken chain catch and its plastic insert that snapped off from the saw's interior—causing the chain to injure the sawyer.



Lessons

- ❖ Make sure to examine your chainsaw's chain catch during your pre-use inspection—not just looking to see if it is present, but ensuring that it is properly attached.
 - ❖ Resources on scene were made aware of this injury incident and checked their saws. One of the remaining three saws that were being operated (a Stihl 441) had a chain catch that was loose.
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