

Toms Mill Fire Incident

Saturday morning, 12/9/2017 at approximately 1030L a contract firefighter from the PatRick 20B Crew was struck by the butt of a tree he was felling.

The injured member (IM) was a Class B Sawyer and has four years of chainsaw experience. Work for the day started around 0730L. The IM had already felled 10 trees that morning with no incidents. At the tree he did his normal size up including determination of primary and secondary escape routes and decided on the cutting techniques that he would be using. The IM then discussed his intended face cuts with his spotter and proceeded sawing. The IM called out loudly that he was starting his face cuts, then he had his spotter to clear away so he could start his back cuts. After finishing the back cut the IM yelled out that the tree was falling towards the road. The spotter and another coworker who was posted as the road guard saw the tree falling and as it was falling it did a "Barber Chair" movement and struck the IM in his right side with the butt of the tree. Once the tree hit the ground it bounced back at the IM and struck him a second time.

The IM's coworkers came to his assistance, fortunately there was an EMT on scene who immediately assessed the injuries and started treatment. He secured both legs together and asked the Crew Boss to call for an ambulance and then took vitals and continued monitoring the IM. The Crew Boss had to drive out a short distance to get radio coverage but finally did make contact with a District employee and told him they had an Incident Within An Incident (IWI) and then he initiated the 9-line and contacted Dispatch.

The IM was secured to a backboard which was provided by the District employee and placed in the back of a pickup truck and driven to a rendezvous point to meet the ambulance. Dispatch called the Johnson County EMS who ordered a lifeflight prior to the ambulance arrival based on the description of the injuries. Once on scene, the EMTs confirmed the need for lifeflight. The ambulance then drove to another rendezvous location and handed off the IM to the Life Flight personnel. The IM was transferred to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) where he was diagnosed with three fractures to his pelvis. The IM was admitted

and in the hospital for four days but was discharged after observation and evaluation for internal injuries.

Weather at the time of the incident was clear and in the mid-40s. Weather was not a factor.

Experience was 4 years with multiple species of tree felling. Experience was not a factor.

Drugs to include over-the-counter medications were not used. Drugs were not a factor.

Fatigue: The IM said he had plenty of rest the night before and didn't consider fatigue a problem however the contracting crew to include the IM had been working approximately two weeks straight so fatigue could be a contributing factor.

Technique: Upon investigation of the cuts made to the tree that struck the IM, poor cutting techniques were made and the saw's chain was very dull. Technique and the dull chain were definitely contributing factors.

[Link to photos of the tree and the cuts made...](https://drive.google.com/open?id=12fLfP7J4ax3vQ5iB07u3XznNtyv9VBRv)

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