



Tree faller on wrong side of wind-thrown tree

INCIDENT

A tree faller was injured when felling a wind-thrown tree.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The tree faller scarfed and back-cut the two spar trees and then felled the wind-thrown tree.

The spar trees did not fall in the direction the faller intended, causing the butt of the wind-thrown tree to fall sideways towards him. The tree faller sustained a fracture to his leg as a result of the accident.

INVESTIGATION

The tree faller was positioned on the wrong side of the wind-thrown tree when making the final cut.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

Rules as stated in the: *Fitec Best Practice Guidelines for Tree felling*:

The following are general guidelines for felling wind-thrown trees.

- Work from the outside of the stand in the direction of the wind-thrown tree.
- Approach each tree with caution.
- Identify the tension and compression zones and side bind in the stem. These are not always obvious until you begin cutting.
- Assess how the stem is going to move when tension is released – upwards and/or sideways.
- Assess the direction and how far the root plate is going to move when released.
- When deciding on the cutting sequence, always make a relief cut into the compression wood first. The depth to which this cut can be made before the bar begins to pinch indicates the amount of tension to be released.
- When making the relief cut, stand on the safe side of the tree. All cuts must be made from the safest position.
- Do not stand where there is danger of a root plate or stem springing back or any branches or slash moving towards you.

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.

