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# ❖ The Safety Net ❖

Protecting Your Human and Financial Resources

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## What's the Buzz on Chain Saw Safety?

Many public entities in South Dakota begin tree-trimming operations this time of the year. While chain saws seem simple enough to use, they can be dangerous if you do not take precautions. The most common cause of chain saw injury is *kickback*. When your chain saw chain binds in the wood or the tip of the saw touches an object, your saw can violently “kickback” at you. This can result in a serious injury.

### Kickback

To lessen the likelihood of a kickback accident, you should:

- Read your manufacturer's warnings about kickback. That way you will reduce the element of surprise which is often what contributes to an accident.
- Hold the saw with both hands.
- Clear the work area of obstructions.
- Ensure that the saw chain is not touching anything when you start the engine.
- Cut only when operating at high speeds.
- Never cut anything above shoulder height.
- Maintain your saw so that it is clean and the chain is sharp and at a proper tension.
- Only use manufacturer-specified or equivalent replacement parts.

### Other Safety Precautions

Whether your chain saw is gasoline or electric powered, here are some other good safety tips:

- Never use just one hand to operate your saw. You have less control and may injure yourself and others.
- If you are tired do not operate your saw.

- Wear proper footwear such as heavy-duty boots that are waterproof or water repellent, cover and support to the ankle, and protect the employee from penetration by chain saws.

- Wear gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection and head protection.
- Wear ballistic nylon leg protection or other leg protection the employer demonstrates provides equivalent protection. The leg protection should cover the full length of the thigh to the tip of the boot on each leg to protect against contact with a moving chain saw.
- Secure long hair and avoid wearing loose clothing and jewelry.
- Never use your saw near bystanders.
- Always start the chain saw on the ground or where otherwise firmly supported.
- Always make sure the chain saw is started with the chain brake engaged.
- Always make sure your chain saw is shut off during fueling.
- After refueling, move 10 feet or more away from the fuel before starting your saw.
- Never begin work until you have secure footing, a work area free of obstructions, and a path of escape from a falling tree.

### Manual Felling

- Before felling is started, the operator should plan and clear a retreat path.
- Before each tree is felled, conditions such as snow and ice accumulation, the wind, the lean of the tree, dead limbs, and the location of other trees should be evaluated by the feller and precautions taken so a hazard is not created for an employee.
- An undercut should be made in each tree being felled unless the employer demonstrates that felling the

(Continued Page 4)



**PLEASE  
SHARE WITH  
ALL DEPTS.  
IN YOUR  
ENTITY!!!**

## Slips and Falls

We usually do not think about slips and falls as being serious safety problems. Yet they effect more than 13 million people in the United States each year and result in billions of dollars in medical costs. This time of year South Dakotan's are often faced with snow and icy conditions. Entities need to be concerned because slips and falls can injury their employees as well as the general public. Contrary to many people's perceptions, slips and falls can be serious. Because the body is usually in an awkward position, it is difficult to protect yourself if you slip or trip. Broken bones and even head injuries are not unusual. In fact, slips and falls are the second leading cause of accidental death.

Since slips and falls happen so frequently and can be caused by so many things, it is important that we know how to avoid them. To start, it pays to remember that just like many other injuries, the vast majority of slips and falls occur when we are hurried or when we get careless. Slips can be caused by a number of things including wet floors, greasy or oily surfaces or weather hazards such as ice or snow. All these situations create a low friction potential that makes it hard for our shoes to grip the surface on which we are walking. There are several ways to deal with this friction problem.

### Public Buildings:

Make sure to remove or minimize potential slip hazards. Mats placed at entrances of buildings give the public an opportunity to wipe off their shoes. "Caution – Wet Floor" signs should be placed in areas where snow has been tracked in and smooth non-carpeted flooring has become wet. Someone should be assigned the responsibility to make sure that these areas are mopped up to help reduce the risk of accidental slips.

### Parking Lots and Sidewalks:

It is important that snow be removed as

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## 2004 Safety Awards

It is that time of year again. Within the next couple of weeks, your entity will be receiving the criteria for the 2004 Safety Awards. This is the 9th year that the South Dakota Public Assurance Alliance and the SDML Worker's Compensation Fund have presented these to those Members who qualify.

There are three award levels. Each level has a set of criteria that has to be accomplished in order to receive an award. Your entity is not competing against any other entities. The awards are designed to recognize entities and their employees who make that extra effort to make the workplace as safe as possible for employees and who work at reducing their exposures for being sued. Last year 34 entities received awards in Pierre at the Annual Safety Award luncheon held in conjunction with annual South Dakota Municipal League Convention.

For those entities that have received awards in the past, please keep up the good work and don't forget to start completing the paperwork for 2004. If your entity has not received an award, 2004 is a good time to start. Review the application and if you have any questions on what you have to do to qualify, please give us a call. We would like to recognize many more of you for your safety and loss control efforts. We would really like to let the citizens of your entity know how hard you are working at protecting the human and financial assets of your entities.

## "NEW" - 1<sup>st</sup> Report of Injury Forms

This is just a reminder that the State of South Dakota will no longer accept the old format for 1<sup>st</sup> Report of Injury forms submitted in the event of a work related injury. Please be certain that you are using the most current 6-1-03 revision.

You can obtain these at the SDML Workers' Compensations new web site, and if you so desire, email them to Claims Associates, Inc.

The web site is [www.sdmlwcfund.com](http://www.sdmlwcfund.com) If you have any questions, please feel free to call either Karen Ripperda or Janet Sporrer at Insurance Benefits, Inc., 800-456-0737.



### Look us up on the Internet

Our websites are:

[www.hagangroup.com](http://www.hagangroup.com) &  
[www.sdpa.org](http://www.sdpa.org)

### For any questions, please contact:

**SDML WC Fund**  
Karen Ripperda

**SDPAA (Liability Pool & Health Pool of SD)**  
Ladene Bachtell

**Risk Services of SD, Inc.**  
Doug Kirkus  
Janet Sporrer

800-456-0737 or  
605-334-1030

### Fire Caused by Trouble Light

In our last issue, we told you about an employee who was injured when hydraulic fluid leaked onto an incandescent bulb of a trouble light causing it to explode. Last month, we received an email from Paul Thomson, who is the Emergency Management and Safety Director for Lawrence County, telling us about another tragic incident involving a fire caused by a trouble light. Paul is also a volunteer firefighter with the Spearfish Fire Department. Paul’s email reads ...

Doug,

On Wednesday afternoon the 26<sup>th</sup> of November at approximately 2:57 PM there was a fire at Burrly’s Service in Deadwood. This is just south of the Decker Food Store, which is south of the Lawrence County Courthouse. I responded to help hearing page Dead-Fire went re-struct-and on the while enroute that there were people trapped inside the building. After putting on my firefighter bunker gear, I ran to the front of the building just in time to help three people on the driveway who had obviously just gotten out of the burning building. All three were airlifted to the Sioux Falls burn center later that day.

As I was cleaning off the top of my desk today, headlines of an article in “The Safety Net” caught my eye. It read, “Trouble Light Explodes Injuring Worker”. It was determined later that the fire in Deadwood was caused by gasoline that was spilled while installing a fuel pump into a gasoline tank. The spilled gas ran across the floor until it hit the hot trouble light lying on the garage floor and then it exploded. Within the three minutes it took for me to respond to the scene, the entire building was engulfed in flames.

... *As I was cleaning off the top of my desk today, headlines of the article in “The Safety Net” caught my eye.* after the wood Department which out as a reported fire heard radio

### Upcoming Video Release

Within the next couple of weeks, your entity should receive the latest video that we had produced, in conjunction with several other Pools, through Zomar Productions. The 23-minute video is titled, “Safety Coordinator Training”. This is the third video that our coalition has had produced that deals specifically with local governmental entities. The first video was “New Employee Orientation and our second video was “Public Officials Liability”.

Over the years we have encouraged each entity belonging to the Pool (s) to establish a safety and loss control program. Oftentimes an individual within the organization steps forward and volunteers to serve as the Safety Coordinator for the entity. This latest video is designed to help that individual learn how to successfully handle these new responsibilities and give them some tips on how to establish a successful safety and loss control program. Please watch for this new video and make sure it gets to the appropriate individuals.

Zomar Productions is in the process of producing our next video, “Law Enforcement Liability”. This should be released within the next few months. Watch upcoming issues for more details.

**RSSD has over 10,000 available!!!**  
Contact Janet at (800) 456-0737 or  
FAX: (605) 334-0556 or  
[www.sdpaa.org](http://www.sdpaa.org)

**Chain Saw - Continued from Page 1**

particular tree without an undercut will not create a hazard for an employee. The undercut should be of a size so the tree will not split and will fall in the intended direction.

- A backcut should be made in each tree being felled. The backcut shall allow for sufficient hinge wood to guide the tree and prevent it from prematurely slipping or twisting off the stump.
- The backcut should be above the level of the horizontal cut of the undercut. Exception: The backcut may be at or below the horizontal cut in tree pulling operations.

**Training**

The employer needs to provide training for each employee, including supervisors. They should be trained in proper maintenance and making adjustments as provided in the manufacturer's specifications to ensure proper care and operations of the equipment. They should also receive training in the proper use of protective equipment, proper cutting techniques and safety procedures by a qualified instructor.

RSSD has sample chain saw safety checklists available upon request.

If your entity does not have a written policy concerning the use of chain saws, you should have one in place. Please review sample policy on this page.

**Chain Saw Policy**

- I. **Scope.**  
This policy applies to all {Name of Department} employees.
- II. **Definition.**  
A portable power saw that has teeth linked together to form an endless chain and is usually used for cutting and trimming trees.
- III. **Standard.**
  - A. **Chain saw operator training.**
    1. Operators shall be trained in proper maintenance and adjustments as provided in the manufacturer's specifications to ensure proper care and operation of city equipment.
    2. Operators shall receive training in proper cutting techniques and safety procedures by a qualified instructor.
    3. Operators shall receive training in the identification and use of proper protective equipment.
  - B. **Chain saw maintenance.**
    1. All chain saws shall be inspected and approved for use by an authorized dealer at least annually and more often if needed. Prior to each use, the operator will visually examine the equipment for deficiencies.
    2. During use, the operator shall periodically stop to check for chain sharpness, adjustment, oil level, bar condition and general operation.
    3. After use the operator is responsible for cleaning the saw and ensuring that the chain is sharp and the saw is in a state of readiness.
    4. The operator is responsible for reporting any problems encountered with the saw to the person responsible for maintaining them.
  - C. **Chain saw operation.**
    1. Supervisors should assign tasks requiring chain saw usage only when absolutely necessary, and then ensure that proper procedures and safety policy is followed.
    2. Chain saws may only be operated by designated operators using procedures as set forth in this policy, and only after satisfactory training has been provided.
    3. Chain saws may only be operated at a work site where there is immediate {city/county} radio communications.
    4. Chain saws must be shut off and cooled before refueling. Chain saws shall be operated with two hands at all times.
    5. Operators shall inspect wood to be sawed for foreign objects (nails, fence, wire, etc.).
    6. Cutting directly overhead is prohibited.
    7. Proper protective equipment shall be worn during cutting operations.
      - a. Approved eye protection with side shields.
      - b. Approved hearing protection.
      - c. Cutting chaps.
      - d. Hard hat.

### Trouble Light Continued from Page 3

Last year a fire in Lead completely burned a repair garage. That fire was also caused by spilled gasoline and a trouble light while replacing a fuel pump of a vehicle. If I remember correctly, several years ago a car dealership in Edgemont also burned to the ground because of a fire started the same way.

I read the Risk Services article last week and had recommended to Rene', my secretary, that all Lawrence County employees get a copy of the newsletter so they could all read the articles. Rene' called the Lawrence County Highway Department first and they also had received a copy and were discussing the articles with other employees already. One of the three persons burned in the fire in Deadwood on Wednesday was a brother of one of the secretaries for the Lawrence County Highway Department.

I have visited several repair garages in Lawrence County in the last few days and have recommended that they not use the incandescent bulb type trouble lights in their repair garages. I have recommended that they replace those trouble lights with the cooler explosive protected fluorescent trouble lights. After telling them of my experience on Wednesday and the history of the incandescent trouble light, I can only hope they choose to make a change. Thank you for helping make our workplaces and our homes safer.

Paul Thomson – Director  
Lawrence County Emergency Management

We would like to thank Paul for this information. We would encourage you to check with the shops located within your entity to see what type of trouble lights that they are using. If you have the incandescent bulb type, we would recommend that you get them replaced with the ones like Paul discusses in his email.

### Slips & Trips Continued from Page 2

possible from sidewalks and parking lots. Ice control substances should also be applied. Someone should be assigned the responsibility to periodically check the conditions of sidewalks and parking lots owned by your entity to make sure that they are safe for employees and the public. Don't forget that employees come to work early and often stay later than normal business hours. A number of employees are injured every year coming to and from work.

Lighting is also important in these areas. With shorter days employees and the public are entering and leaving facilities during reduced daylight. Parking lots and building entrances should be well lighted to help prevent accidental slips and falls.

#### Employee Safety:

Employees should be reminded of some of the things that they can do to avoid becoming injured due to an accidental fall. Employees should take small steps when crossing a slippery area. This keeps the center of gravity steady. Employees should also be reminded to walk slowly and deliberately in slippery areas. Wearing appropriate shoes can help avoid slipping on hazardous surfaces. The type of sole the shoe has is the key.

### 2004 MSHA Annual Refresher Training

RSSD has begun the annual refresher training classes as required by the Mine Safety and Health Administration. A total of 27 classes are being offered this year at 17 different sites. The classes being offered this year include back injury prevention, basic first aid, equipment transportation and defensive driving for maintenance vehicle operators.

Members of the Pools can send employees to these 7-hour classes at no cost. For more information contact Janet at (800) 456-0737.

Soft rubber works well on dry surfaces, but not on wet or greasy ones. Hard rubber is good for greasy surfaces, but not on dry or wet ones. Synthetic soles work well in many conditions, but may not be recommended for oily surfaces. Most shoes come with information about the conditions that they are best suited for. Depending on the types of work the employee does may necessitate them to consider using different shoes for different tasks.

Employees should also be reminded to check the condition of their equipment for potential hazards. Each year a number of employees are injured as they climb in and out of equipment. Because the steps on the equipment can be snow or ice covered employees should be reminded to be sure to use handholds when getting in and out of the equipment. Employees should be discouraged from jumping from equipment to the slippery surface below.

Slips, trips and falls can happen to anyone. Employees should take their time, think about what they are doing and follow good safety practices. If they adhere to these rules they can avoid potentially dangerous problems.

<b>UPCOMING TRAINING SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>February</b>		
10th	Forklift Safety	Sioux Falls
11th	MASH	Vermillion
11th	MSHA	Winner
12th	MSHA	Sioux Falls
12th	MSHA	Burke
18th	MSHA	Watertown
19th	MSHA	Watertown
24th	MSHA	Watertown
<b>March</b>		
3rd	MSHA	Brookings
4th	MSHA	Brookings
9th	Defensive Driving	Winner
10th	MSHA	Huron
11th	MSHA	Huron
16th	Defensive Driving	Sioux Falls
18th	Defensive Driving	Mitchell
18th	Defensive Driving for Transit Drivers	Mitchell
<b>April</b>		
14th	Defensive Driving for Maintenance Vehicle Operators	Sioux Falls
21st	Defensive Driving for Maintenance Vehicle Operators	Sioux Falls

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