



## FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

600 JEFFERSON PLAZA, SUITE 350  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852

PHONE: 301/838-9385

FAX: 301/838-9481

## SAFETY ALERT

08-S-15

### BABBITT POT BURNS DRIVER'S HANDS AND FACE

November 2008

[www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/08-s-15.html](http://www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/08-s-15.html)

**BACKGROUND:** On a warm summer day in the Lake States, a truck driver of a whole-tree chipping business was cleaning up after a full day's work.

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The employee had been employed by the contractor for three years. He was fully trained, had no accident history, and attended monthly safety meetings.

**UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION:** Several unsafe conditions contributed to the incident:

- 1) The babbitt pot (which contains a molten metal alloy used to build up and maintain chipper knives), normally turned off by 10 o'clock every morning, had been left on by a trainee all day.
- 2) The towel for drying hands had been moved from the sink area.
- 3) There were towels stored on shelves above the Babbitt pot.



**ACCIDENT:** Before washing his hands, the employee removed his hard hat. He didn't notice the towel was no longer at its normal spot until after he was finished washing his hands. He glanced around the small shop and saw a towel above the Babbitt pot. He walked to it and while reaching for the towel, water that had gathered on his hard hat fell into the Babbitt pot and splashed extremely hot metal onto his face, arms, and hands.

**INJURY:** He received third-degree burns on his upper lip, right hand, and forearm.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:** There should be a system in place to ensure that all equipment is powered down when not in use, with or without trainees on the job. With a trainee at the job site, it is even more imperative to check these items. A change in storage may be in order—storing anything used often above the babbitt pot should be avoided. A warning sign should be posted at the station noting burn hazards and safety requirements, including a requirement that no liquids should come within 10 feet of the Babbitt pot; and the pot should be covered when not in use.

*Reviewed by:*

Vickie Hoffart

Lake States Region Manager

*Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.*