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SAFETY ALERT

10-S-2

PRESSURE WASHER INJURES WORKER'S FOOT

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BACKGROUND: On a summer morning in the Southeast, a logging crew member was pressure washing a drum chipper. The chipper had been running unusually hot that day, and the crew member used a period of slack time to clean out debris that had accumulated in certain areas of the chipper.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The crew member was in his early 50s, and he had been in the logging and sawmilling business for his entire career. He was wearing a hard hat and leather, steel-toed boots.

UNSAFE ACTS: The crew member climbed onto a high, level spot on the chipper and began cleaning the debris out using the pressure washer's wand. While moving the wand from place to place, he inadvertently directed the water spray closely and directly across one of his boots.

ACCIDENT: The force of the water from the pressure washer's wand cut through his leather boot just above the area where the steel-toe protection started.

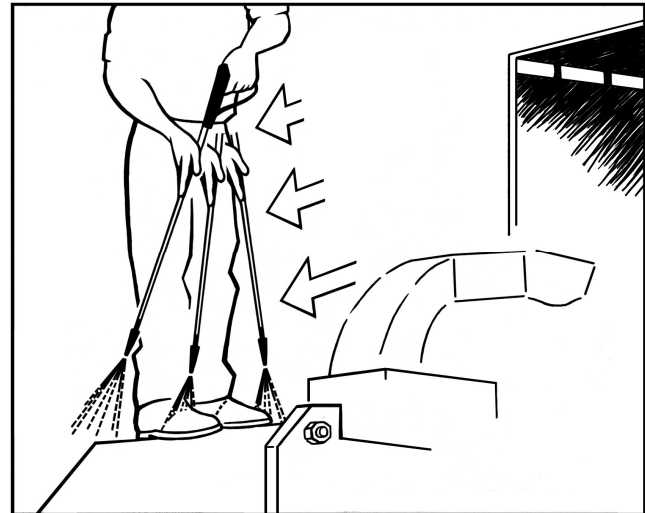
INJURIES: The crew member's foot was lacerated and severely burned. At first, he did not think it was a serious injury, so he continued working. Later that evening when the pain intensified, he went to a hospital emergency room. A doctor cleaned and drained the area on his foot to prevent infection. The crew member missed a day and half of work, and his treatment required two additional follow-up doctor visits.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION: Be aware that the strong spray from a pressure washer can cause serious wounds that might appear minor at first. Delaying treatment can increase the risk of infection and eventual disability. Never point a pressure washer at yourself or others. While cleaning equipment, stand in a safe place where you will not lose your balance or be subjected to the spray directly or the spray splatter. Wear safety glasses when using a pressure washer, and always follow the safety instructions included in the owner's manual.

Reviewed by:

Rick Meyer

Appalachian/Southwide Region Manager



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