



## Chainsaw Inflicted Facial Injury

A chainsaw operative recently sustained a significant facial injury when a chainsaw that he was using kicked back. The injuries comprised of deep lacerations and a cheek bone fracture to the left side of his face.

The accident occurred when the operative was cutting vines positioned at head height along an existing fence line. While doing so, his chainsaw came into contact with an adjacent metal chain link fence, which subsequently kicked it back towards his face, with his mesh visor taking a direct impact. This resulted in significant facial injuries (pictured below) which required immediate first aid on site and surgery at hospital.



The operative was both experienced and competent, however, on this occasion it was concluded that time was not taken to fully assess the site. The particular chainsaw had two handles, but due to the position and angle at which the operative was using it, this did not provide sufficient control to counter the kickback.

### Learning points

1. Never become complacent when using chainsaws.
2. Work sites must be sufficiently assessed, in particular for additional hazards that may cause a potential kickback of chainsaws e.g. stumps, stubs, chain-link, rabbit netting etc
3. Select a safe work position so that the body and head are not in line with any kickback
4. Ensure chainsaws are used in a way that will avoid kickback: not allowing the nose to come into contact with obstructions; never over-reaching; keeping the saw below chest height, keeping depth gauges at the correct height and using appropriate chain speed for the material being cut.

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