

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 100

Date: January 2026	Focus Group: Chainsaw Thinnings
Topic: Hung-Up Tree – Pre-Cut Assessments	Issued by: Nic Steens

Background: During thinning operations in dense regeneration, a chainsaw operator was posting a hung-up regeneration stem. The stem slid and rebounded unexpectedly from adjacent trees, striking the operator's lower leg.

Injury and Damage Details: Minor injury only – bruising to the ankle. No lost time, no equipment damage.

Risk Awareness: Hung-up trees contain stored tension and can move unpredictably. Treating posting as routine increases exposure to serious injury. The investigation found that posting was being performed frequently as a normal task while hazard assessments for individual hung-up stems were inconsistent or incomplete, and worker positioning relative to rebound and fall zones was not always optimal.

Safe Behaviours and Basics – Clearing hang-ups in thinning:

- Assess every hang-up before clearing: tree lean, slope, stored tension, escape routes, and rebound risk etc. (ACOP 17.4, 21.10).
- Never work under, leave unattended, or fail to notify others of a hung-up tree.
- Treat posting as high risk: follow the correct cut sequence, limit posts to ≤ 1.2 m, and work from a safe uphill-side position.
- Supervisors must actively monitor dense regeneration work where posting or other approved methods are frequently used e.g., 1-hour of active monitoring each day.
- Ensure all required tools, wedges, and equipment are available before starting.

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators:
2. Place on-site notice board or in file:

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

