

Maintenance – Serious Harm!

“That reminds me of the accident in the Bay of Plenty where the guy lost his leg”!
Northland Department of Labour, Forestry Inspector

Yes – different machines and people yet many similarities, and surprising that the lessons are not being learnt! Maintenance, involving heavy machinery, is a very serious activity!

FIPS # 1816 Lost Time Injury (9 days)

Two Machine Operators decided to repair a damaged wheel loader, using the forwarder grapple for ‘muscle’... They parked the machines together, and a pass chain placed around the bent guard on the loader.

The Operator on the ground had his back to the Forwarder Operator as he prepared the chain for the forwarder grapple to grab. The Forwarder Operator, with out visibility or indeed any other communication, closed the grapple. The grapple caught the right arm of the man resulting in injury.



Maintenance – Points to observe:

1. Section 13 of the HSE Act says that employees:
 - must be **sufficiently experienced** (qualified) to do their work safely or otherwise **supervised by an experienced person**.
 - must be adequately trained in the safe use of plant, objects, substance and PPE that they are or may be required to handle.

If there is any doubt, maintenance must be performed by a specialist!

2. Appoint a 'competent person' **to take charge of the operation**. This person ensures:
 - His sole function is supervision
 - That a suitable and safe maintenance zone is established i.e. sufficient area away from other activity.
 - The means of communication is established and the signals (if required) are known and understood by all participants
 - Machines are switched off or correctly isolated
 - Machine brakes are applied and all hydraulic loads relieved
 - No one enters a machine without his go-ahead and no person, apart from those directly involved, enters the safe maintenance zone
 - No machine movements are made without his go-ahead
 - That the Approved Code of Practice for Forestry Operations is observed – namely:
 1. No person shall work under a raised blade, load or accessory; or any machine raised for repairs
 2. Supports are used to ensure that the object cannot be dropped or lowered.