

## Chaps are Chaps?

Well apparently not. A new standard for protection in chaps from chainsaw cuts was set in 1997. The new standard was to reflect the higher chain speeds and power of saws in use from the early 90's. Unfortunately the chaps made to meet the spec at the time were very heavy and as such never were accepted by the market. Now with advances in materials used, chaps are now able to be manufactured that will meet the 1997 protection standard.

Within the chaps that are constructed to the new standard it appears that the material layers within the chaps have Kevlar type material weaved in the fabric and another improvement is that the exterior layer appears to be a heavier material than previously.



Given the sceptics regarding the difference in "old" vs. the new chaps, a trial was undertaken at the Richmond office at the week Nelson harvesting suppliers meeting. The photos show much more than can be written done, but to answer the questions:

- The same saw used on each set of chaps
- Saw was operated by a logging contractor – not a shiny arse
- Saw was running at full noise and was sharp.



*Old Chaps*



*New Standard Chaps*

## Summary

- Old standard chaps were cut right through and well into the log beneath “leg” before stalling the saw. Comments were that the material within the chaps was “easily cut”
- New chaps, the material within did not cut and clogged the saw before the saw reached and cut the inside layer. There was no cut to the inside layer of the chaps!



*Old Chaps (note the cut into log)*



*New standard chaps*



*Log underneath chaps – cut to left is old chaps and finger indicates where new standard chaps did not cut log*



*Chainsaw after cutting new standard chaps*

All present were surprised at how effective the new chaps performed and how ineffectual the older standard of chaps were to a full speed cut from a modern saw.

Process from here:

All new chaps purchased into the Nelson Forests Business must meet the 1997 standard and all existing chaps to be changed out of the business in a timely manner which has previously been communicated to contractors.