

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**



SAFETY ALERT

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SAFETY ALERT 09-3

Power Saw Blade Failure

Issued June 1, 2009

On Saturday April 25, 2009 personnel were cutting wood (fallen dead trees) at the Kirkuk Regional Air Base, Iraq. They were using a Partner K-12 when the saw blade failed. The blade was a Target EH series 14" hand-held high speed DRY/WET cutting diamond blade. As a result of this failure, a 2" x 2" piece of blade propelled toward a service member's upper right foot and cut through his combat boot behind the protective toe. The service member suffered a severed artery, veins, a cut tarsal bone and several severed tendons.

An inspection of the blade revealed:

- Multiple cracks in the blade.
- Rust was visible on inside edges where blade failed/separated indicating cracks were present for sometime prior to the cutting operation.
- Further inspection revealed other blades with the same cracks and rust deposits.
- The warning label was worn off from the affected blade and several others.

The Division of Fire Safety recommends that:

- All fire departments should ensure that adequate power equipment inspection checklists are available AND UTILIZED for all equipment in accordance with manufacturer's operation and inspection procedures.
- Supervisors should conduct spot-checks to verify effective inspections are carried out.
- Personnel do not become complacent in their inspection of equipment.
- Refresher training be provided to ensure personnel use the right tool (and blade) for the right job.
- Personnel identify, report, and replace potentially defective equipment ASAP.
- Personnel remove saw blades from service if they:
 - Do not have a readily available legible and understandable set of instructions and warning cautions.
 - Appear unserviceable or environmentally compromised (rust, worn) or are cracked.
 - Do not match saw manufacturer recommended RPM and pairing.

PLEASE POST IMMEDIATELY

