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ON-THE-JOB EMERGENCY MEDICAL FILES

Safety: logging

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INTRODUCTION: When an injury occurs on a logging job, seeing that the injured logger receives prompt and appropriate treatment is the top priority. "Appropriate" treatment rests on awareness of an individual's critical medical history and sensitivities to matters such as previously broken bones, a rare blood type, or an allergy to certain medications. Unfortunately, most loggers do not keep this kind of information at the job site, if they maintain it at all. FRA's 1996 Southeastern Region Outstanding Logger, Frankie Arrants, has solved this problem.



Fig. 1: Employee medical file box just inside Arrants Logging's service trailer.

GENERAL FEATURES: Arrants, president of Jamesville, North Carolina-based Arrants Logging, Inc., keeps copies of his logging employees' medical records in a file box kept in the crew service trailer. The file box can accommodate letter-size file folders for every employee on a crew. Each employee file contains a brief medical history, including critical, potentially life saving, medical information. Since medical information is private, Arrants asks his employees to sign a form granting the company permission to keep the medical information in a file at the job site and to

make the information available to company employees and emergency medical personnel in the event an employee is seriously injured on the job. (If an employee does not sign the permission form, Arrants respects the preference and does not maintain the file for that employee at the site.) The file box is clearly marked “Employee Medical Files Only” and is secured in plain view just inside the service trailer door.

APPLICATION: The file is only opened if a crew member is injured on the job and requires emergency medical treatment at the job site or at a local medical facility. In these instances the crew foreman pulls the injured employee’s medical record and gives it to the emergency medical or first aid responders at the job site or delivers it to the hospital or other medical facility with the injured crew member.

SPECIFICATIONS AND COST: The file box is a standard impact-resistant plastic letter file size box. The file boxes are available for a few dollars at office supply stores, drug stores, and discount department stores.

COMMENT: Contractors should obtain legal advice about medical privacy laws in their states. They also should obtain advice from emergency medical technicians or doctors concerning what information the medical files should include.

Michael Wetzel
Southeastern Technical Division Forester

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

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