



## **OVERHEAD HAZARDS**

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Safety professionals find that the largest percentage of accidents can be attributed to overhead hazards. Typical examples are improperly felled trees, lodged or leaning trees, dead limbs and snags, broken branches, overhead grapple loads, stems falling off trailers, and falling implements and attachments caused by sudden loss of hydraulic pressure. The two main locations where woods workers are exposed to overhead hazards are **at the landing and tree felling sites**.

Accidents can be minimized by protecting workers with fully enclosed equipment cabs, separated work zones with buffers, proper loading and unbinding procedures, and achieving zero energy state during maintenance. Many of the high hazard overhead situations, however, can be eliminated through one technique: **worker awareness**. It is usually exposed, on-the-ground workers who are at greatest risk and, frequently, are in those situations because of their actions.

Employers who train and promote a personal HEADS-UP! attitude have fewer employee injuries.

Consider the following training points:

1. Wear your hard hat.
2. Maintain a buffer distance of at least two tree lengths from tree felling areas (300 feet for high speed disk saws). A greater distance may be required on downhill slopes.
3. Even where felling or other operations are not going on, scan at least 50 feet ahead on your travel path for **ground** hazards and for at least 100 feet ahead for all **overhead** hazards.
4. Do not place yourself under any object that can move due to gravity or loss of hydraulic pressure, such as:
  - a. lodged trees
  - b. logs in loader grapples
  - c. raised equipment attachments
  - d. logs not properly loaded when binding and unbinding
  - e. binding chain being thrown over a load of wood
5. Make yourself visible with high-contrast, high-visibility safety colors.
6. Always make eye contact with equipment operators, signal your intentions to approach, and approach only when it is safe to do so.
7. Never enter a moving equipment work area until the equipment is stopped and implements grounded.
8. When felling or loading logs, be aware of overhead electrical lines.