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FALLING TREE SMASHES PICKUP TRUCK

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BACKGROUND: A logging crew was harvesting a steep site in the Appalachians. It was a mild autumn day.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The company owner was in his early 50s, with more than 20 years of logging experience. The timber cutter was an experienced logger who had completed a logger training program.

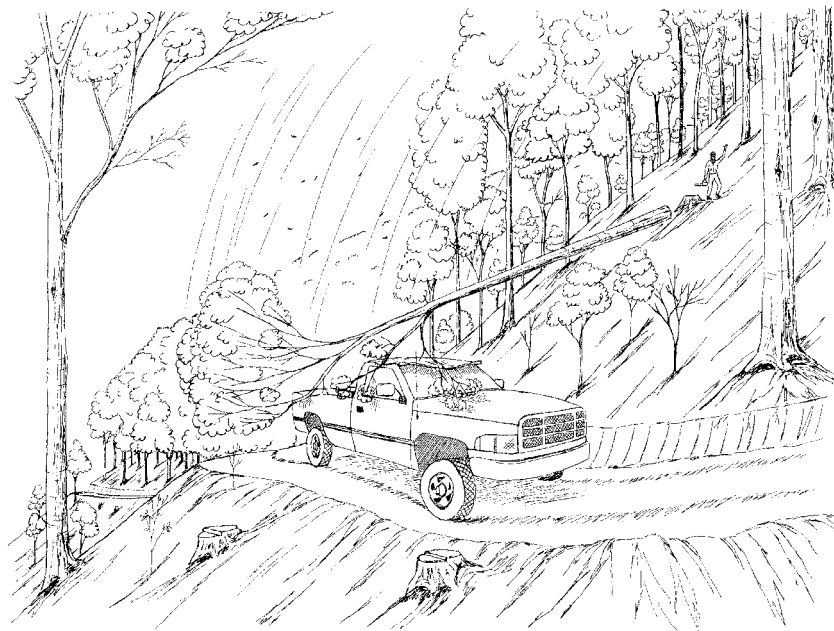
UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITIONS: The owner drove a pickup truck into an area where trees were being cut, without clear communication with the timber cutter. The owner was mistaken about exactly where the timber cutter was working.

ACCIDENT: As the owner was leaving the job, the skidder operator phoned him and asked him to bring a skidder key to the landing. The owner drove back uphill on an access road leading to the landing. The owner thought the timber cutter was working below the road (in which case trees would fall away from the road), but the cutter had actually moved above the road. As the owner approached the area where trees were being cut, he stopped and turned off the engine to listen for a chain saw. He did not hear one. The timber cutter also shut off the saw before making the last cut to listen for vehicles. Ironically, both were stopped at the same time, and neither heard the other. As the owner started the truck and continued uphill, the timber cutter made the last cut, and the tree fell onto the pickup.

INJURY/DAMAGE: The truck was damaged extensively. Although the tree fell onto the cab, the owner was not injured. The impact was reduced somewhat by the owner accelerating as he realized what was happening, so the truck was hit by branches rather than the main stem of the tree.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- When trees may fall across or near a road, prevent use of the road by stationing a person or barrier on each end of the area.
- Timber cutters, equipment operators, and vehicle drivers must clearly identify and communicate the location of active timber felling. Walkie-talkies or cell phones would improve communication.
- Post warning signs at entrances to harvesting sites to discourage others from entering an area where trees are being cut. OSHA requires that "no employee shall approach a feller closer than two tree lengths of trees being felled until the feller has acknowledged that it is safe to do so."

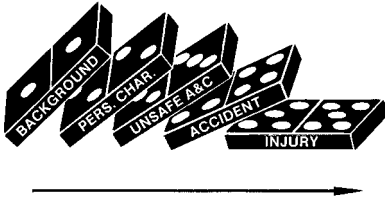


Reviewed by:

Rick Meyer

Appalachian Technical Division Forester

Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.



This Safety Alert analyzes an injury in accordance with the chain of events represented by the five dominoes at left. Pioneer industrial safety experts H. W. Heinrich and Alfred Lateiner developed this accident analysis system to provide a graphic sense of how injuries can be avoided. Their methodology has been accepted by safety professionals worldwide.

SAFETY MEETING REPORT

Date: _____ Company: _____

Topic(s) Discussed: _____

Names of Employees Attending:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Conducted By: _____

Signed: _____

Comments / Recommendations:

