



## FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

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## SAFETY ALERT

**05-S-5**

### LODGED TREE KILLS CUTTER DURING LIMBING

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[www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/05-s-5.html](http://www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/05-s-5.html)

**BACKGROUND:** A timber cutter was limbing a 70 to 80-foot poplar tree adjacent to a skid road on a summer day in a mountainous region of the Appalachians.

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The 32-year-old timber cutter had been felling trees for approximately three months for this particular company. His previous work experience was unreported. He was wearing a hard hat, hearing protection, chaps, and boots.

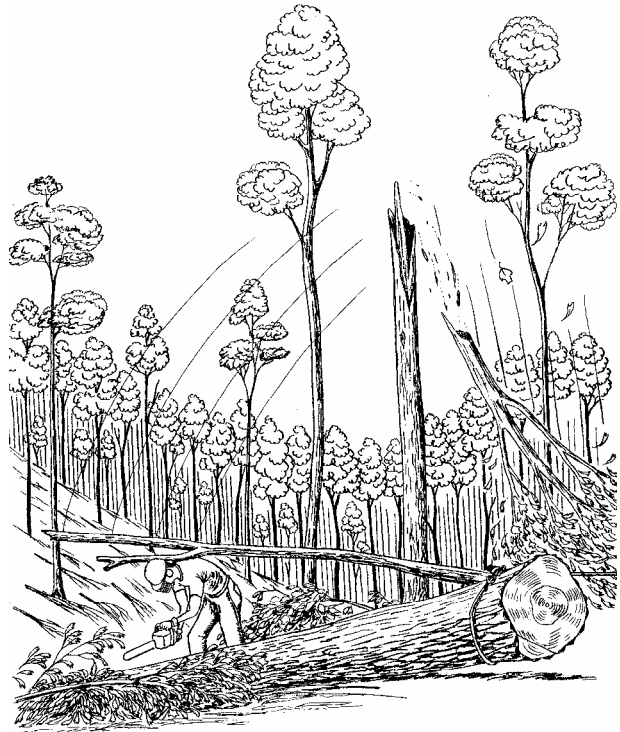
**UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITIONS:** Reportedly ignoring his employer's instructions to bypass the tree, the timber cutter proceeded with felling a 70- to 80-foot poplar adjacent to a skid road. A 40- to 50-foot dead locust tree was lodged in a smaller poplar tree slightly downhill from the large poplar which had been felled. The top of the dead, leaning locust may have been partially supported by the poplar he had just felled. The timber cutter and the dozer operator cable-skidded the large poplar and another fallen tree closer to the skid road. The timber cutter then went approximately 60 feet downhill to begin limbing the large felled poplar.

**ACCIDENT:** As he was limbing, the upper section of the smaller poplar which was supporting the dead locust snapped off, allowing the dead locust tree to fall and strike him on his back and head.

**INJURY:** The victim died at the scene before EMS arrived.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:**

- Employers should ensure that any snag in or near a work zone is identified, tagged/flagged, and removed mechanically before proceeding with work.
- Employers should ensure that tree fellers properly evaluate the timber and the area around it immediately prior to felling, so that potential hazards can be identified and appropriate control measures implemented.
- Never walk in the potential direction-of-fall path of a lodged tree or snag.
- Employees should follow their employers' instructions regarding safety.



Reviewed by:  
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*Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.*