Errant Bucket Kills Worker
A chainsaw operator was cutting root balls from trees pulled over during an ice storm. The site clearing was being accomplished with the help of a track mounted hydraulic excavator with a bucket.

When the excavator operator realized he had not seen the chainsaw operator for about 15 minutes, he moved the excavator to get a better view and saw the victim on the ground.

Unable to get a response from the felled worker, he called 911, but the victim had sustained fatal injuries after being struck by the bucket and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Workers should always be aware of the location of others on a shared job site. Those in a better position to see, and who have the most protection, hold the larger share of that burden. Best bet: Create a grid of the job site and decide on a work plan that keeps workers separated when possible!

— NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

Driver Suffocates Clearing Chip Jam in Trailer
A truck driver was unloading wood chips from his open-top tractor-trailer unit via a movable floor unloading system on a mid-winter day in the Northeast. The trailer had a cross-stability bar centrally located at the top of the trailer. When using the movable floor unloading system to offload wood chips, wood chips would routinely jam at the cross-stability bar.

The driver positioned the truck to unload the chips, unlocked and opened the trailer's rear gate, and activated the movable floor unloading system. Witnesses observed the victim climb the exterior fixed ladder on the trailer and walk along the top edge of the trailer towards the rear of the trailer. This was reported as a common practice, especially when entering the trailer to clear chips jammed at the trailer's cross-stability bar. Although there were no witnesses after that point, it appears that the driver stepped from the top edge of the trailer onto the chip pile to clear the jam.

It appears that when the driver stepped onto the load, a void within the pile caused the pile to give way. The driver fell through, into the pile, and the chips engulfed and suffocated him. The movable floor unloading system continued operating, offloading the chips. Eventually the victim was offloaded from the trailer through the trailer's rear gate along with the chips.

Approximately ten minutes had gone by when the company owner and a co-worker realized that they had not seen the driver. The company owner went over to the trailer and noticed that the movable floor unloading system and the truck were still running. A pile of chips had accumulated on the ground and was now blocking the rear gate opening and preventing the remaining chips from being offloaded. The company owner then moved some chips from the top middle section of the pile and noticed the victim's head.

The company owner turned off the movable floor unloading system and placed a call for emergency medical services. The local police arrived at the incident location within minutes and then placed calls to the local fire department and the medical examiner's office. The driver was pronounced dead at the incident location. The medical examiner listed the cause of death as cardiac arrest due to compression asphyxia.

Recommendations:
- Minimize load jamming by ensuring that chip trailers equipped with both cross-stability bars and movable floor unloading systems are not loaded up to or above the cross-stability bar.
- Provide employees frequent training on safe trailer loading, unloading, and jam clearing procedures.
- Develop, implement, and enforce a permit space program for permit-required confined spaces, such as loaded chip trailers (as OSHA requires).
- Ensure that trailers with movable floor unloading systems are either equipped with automatic sweeping tarps or that manual sweeping does not begin until after the entire trailer has been offloaded.
- Conduct routine hazard assessments of equipment and of how tasks are completed to identify potential hazards to which workers are exposed.

— FRA SAFETY ALERT

Sawmill Worker Killed by Circular Saw
A 32-year-old laborer at a sawmill died as a result of injuries received when he lost his balance and fell onto the log carriage directly in front of the 56-inch circular saw.

He had been using a cane hook to turn the logs for repeated passes through the saw. After hooking a log, he somehow lost his balance and fell backward onto the carriage; the saw cut him from his shoulders through his midsection.

A co-worker (a sawyer) was present, but had been facing another direction and did not see the victim fall. When the sawyer turned around and discovered what had happened, he ran outside and called for help.

The owner's wife called 911 from the nearby office building. Although emergency personnel responded promptly, they found the victim dead at the scene. The deputy coroner was summoned and pronounced the victim dead upon the coroner's arrival.

The Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) investigator concluded that, to prevent similar occurrences, employers should:
- Install guardrails or barriers between workers and the log carriage, to prevent workers from falling onto the carriage.
- Designate a qualified person to conduct regular safety inspections.
- Develop, implement, and enforce a written safety program which includes worker training in recognizing, avoiding, and abating hazards in the workplace.

— MISH