Mechanic Injured While Repairing Tracked Feller-Buncher

On a cool, rainy day, a mechanic was replacing hydraulic lines on a tracked feller-buncher.

The hose was deep inside the hydraulic compartment of the feller-buncher, and the track only offered limited room for access to the area. The mechanic decided to work from the ground. Another individual helped while lying on the track. When the mechanic realized he could not reach the hose from the ground, he decided to stand on a 5-gallon bucket of hydraulic fluid to gain extra height to reach the hose. The bucket was an unstable work platform, and due to water and oil residue, the surface was slippery.

The mechanic had reattached the hose when he slipped off the bucket and fell to the ground.

His left arm caught the track on his way down, and he dislocated his shoulder.

Recommendations:
- Use proper tools for the job. A step ladder or work platform should have been used.
- All work surfaces should be free of fluids or loose particles.

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Logger Killed When Struck by Top of Falling Tree

A “tree faller” died after being struck by a twenty-foot long tree section that had broken from a tree felled by a co-worker. The victim was working a strip of the logging site down slope from two other cutters. A co-worker (another tree faller), cutting in the adjacent area, felled a tree measuring approximately 111-125 feet in height.

As the felled tree descended to the ground, it struck one more standing tree and broke into several sections. The top section of the felled tree struck the victim as he was trying to escape. The local emergency medical rescue unit was summoned via radio and responded to the incident scene, but the victim died from the injuries sustained in the incident.

To prevent similar occurrences the investigative team concluded that loggers should follow these guidelines.
- All tree cutting operations should adhere to the principle that a distance of at least two tree lengths should separate adjacent occupied work areas.
- A “pre-job safety plan” should be in place for the cutting site and the plan should be reviewed prior to each day’s cutting.
- Training and education in logging operations should be a continuing process for skills development and for the understanding of safe methods and practices in the logging industry.
- A timely warning should be given prior to felling each tree.
- The felling of a cut tree should be controlled by a proper under-cut and back-cut, leaving hinge wood of sufficient thickness to guide the tree during its fall.
- A well-defined escape path should be planned so a quick retreat can be made to a safe area “out of harm’s way” from a falling tree.

Log Truck Runs into Back of Another Log Truck

Two log trucks from the same logging company were loaded with treelength pulpwood that had overhanging logs. The two drivers were taking their load to the same mill, so they traveled together.

The two trucks traveled for 20-plus miles from the jobsite and entered a small town. They had to slow down and shift lanes due to road construction. The first driver had downshifted and slowed to the 35 MPH speed limit. He then stopped for a red traffic light. The second driver failed to slow down.

The second driver ran into the rear end of the first truck. Several long logs from the first truck entered the engine compartment of the second tractor. One of the logs deflected toward the driver’s side and entered the cab through the firewall. It penetrated the driver and continued out the back window.

Recommendations:
- Manage spacing by keeping safe following distances. One rule of thumb recommends a following distance of one second for each 10 feet of vehicle length at speeds below 40 MPH and an additional second at greater speeds.
- Eliminate distractions – they remove precious seconds needed to react.
- Reduce speed when entering construction zones or towns.
- Attach end-of-load warning flags or flashing strobe lights as required by state or federal law.

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Tips to Prevent Workplace Fires

- Get Organized: Practice good workplace housekeeping.
- Designated Smoking Areas: Allow smoking only in designated areas & extinguish smoking materials safely.
- Fire Extinguishers: Maintain appropriate type and number, and know how to use properly.
- Electrical Hazards: Fires often start in faulty wiring and malfunctioning electrical equipment.
- Sprinklers/Smoke Detectors: Never block this equipment and test systems at least annually.
- Chemical Safety: Use/store/label chemicals safely. Provide adequate ventilation when using and storing.
- Waste Control: Control the accumulations of flammable and combustible waste materials.
- Prevent Ignition: Use precautions to prevent ignition in potentially explosive atmospheres. Use non-sparking tools and control static electricity.
- Exits: Exits should be posted and well lit.
- Contact Info: Maintain a list of emergency contact phone numbers. Basics such as the company address, phone number and floor plan if applicable.