WORK SAFE

Winch/Tie Down Bar Strikes Driver's Face
A log truck driver was binding down a load of pine at the landing. The trucker was distracted as a crew member talked to him. He took his eye off the winch/tie down and did not fully insert the bar into the ratcheting-wheel spindle as he was tightening the strap. His face was directly above the travel path of the winch bar. (Source: WA FACE)

When the driver pushed down with the weight of his body to apply the final turn to the spindle, the winch bar popped out of the spindle hole and catapulted backward. The end that was near the spindle struck his face.

The log trucker suffered a bloody nose and black eye. He received medical treatment and lost two days of work.

Recommendations:
- Ensure the winch/tiedown bar stays fully inserted into the spindle when tightening a binder strap.
- Make sure the cranking mechanism is working properly and ensure that the ratchet pawl is fully engaged in the ratchet wheel.
- Always keep head and body away from the strike zone of the bar/handle.
- Wear the required PPE – gloves, hard hat, and eye protection – when binding a load.
- Give full attention to the task at hand. Stop if distracted.

FRA SAFETY ALERT

Struck by Lumber at Sawmill
An "unscreamer" operator died of injuries sustained when he was struck in the chest with a 1" x 6" x 10' board on the previous afternoon. The board traveled approximately 45 feet at a high rate of speed after being ejected from a "trim saw," striking the unscreamer operator at his workstation.

The sawmill emergency team responded to the injured victim within minutes of the incident and placed a 911 call for assistance. The local community rescue and medical unit took charge of treatment for the injured individual at the site of the incident and then transported the victim to a local hospital. He died the following day.

To prevent future similar occurrences, the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) investigative team concluded that employers should follow these guidelines:
- Machine guarding should be in place to prevent exposure to the machinery and process materials.
- When new or reconditioned equipment is introduced to the workplace, a review of safety precautions should be conducted, including any and all regulatory compliance parameters that apply to the equipment and the operation of the equipment.
- Routine hazard recognition audits/reviews should be conducted on a regular basis.

Log Rolls Off Truck at Sawmill Killing Truck Driver
A truck driver was killed when he was struck by a log that rolled off the top of his tractor trailer truck while preparing the truck for unloading at a sawmill complex. The driver had picked up a load of logs and arrived at the mill with the logs secured by straps and stacked well above the standards of the truck trailer.

At the unloading area, the driver exited the truck and released the binders on the driver's side of the trailer. He then walked to the passenger's side to pull the straps off of the logs. One of the logs rolled off the stack, striking him. Sawmill employees called EMS and began performing CPR. EMS arrived in eight minutes and transported the victim to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

In order to prevent similar incidents from occurring, FACE investigators recommend the following:
- The height of the logs should not exceed the height of the standards on the truck.
- Binders on logs should not be released prior to securing the logs with an unloading line or device.
- Binders should be released only from the side on which the unloader operates, except when the person making the release is using a remote control device or is protected by racks or other means.
- Written policies should be in place regarding unloading procedures for loggers at the mill and enforced.
- Loggers should wear head protection while unloading.

FRA SAFETY ALERT

Operator Lacerates Hand Changing Buncher Teeth
A feller buncher operator was installing new cutting teeth on a cutting head outfitted on a wheeled feller buncher. He was using a 36" breaker bar to loosen the 1" bolts that secure the teeth. Then he used an impact gun to remove the bolts and change each tooth. The cutting disk was held in place with a piece of wood or a large metal bar so that it would not rotate.

After changing several teeth successfully, the breaker bar slipped off one of the bolts that he tried to loosen, and he fell forward.

The operator braced his fall with his left hand and landed on top of one of the recently changed, razor-sharp teeth. He hit his left hand, suffering a severe laceration with extensive tendon and nerve damage to the hand.

Recommendations:
- Although extension bars have been designed for use with this type of job, they still require that the user grip these extension bars firmly with both hands, while maintaining proper body position and firm footing. The face and body should be positioned out of harm's way.
- Using the impact wrench prior to using the extension bar may loosen the bolt and prevent the need for the extension bar.
- Require the use of cut-resistant gloves when performing this operation.

FRA SAFETY ALERT