



2003 INJURY RATE FOR MECHANIZED LOGGING OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH

Surveys/Studies: *safety*

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INTRODUCTION: Researchers at Virginia Tech, with financial support from the Timber Harvesting and Transportation Safety (THATS) Foundation and cooperation from logging industry Workers' Compensation Insurance (WCI) providers Davis-Garvin, Amerisafe, Forestry Mutual, and Manry-Rawls, have determined the annual injury rate for mechanized logging operations in the South since 1996. The annual injury rate, or Total Case Incident Rate (TCIR), is the number of injuries per 100 workers per year. Previous year's rates have been reported in FRA Technical Releases 99-R-2, 00-R-2, 01-R-12, 02-R-15, and 03-R-27.

FINDINGS: Researchers randomly selected a "blended" sample of 260 insured mechanized logging firms operating in 12 Southern States from Virginia to Texas. From those firms, they recorded the total number of injuries reported in 2003 as well as the total number of workers employed by the sample group. The TCIR was then calculated using the following equation:

$$\text{TCIR} = \frac{\text{total annual \# of injuries reported} \times 200,000}{\text{total annual hours worked (all employees)}}$$

Fig. 1 shows the TCIR for mechanized (mechanical felling) logging operations in the South for 1996 [10.0]; 1998 [7.2]; 1999 [5.7]; 2000 [6.1]; 2001 [5.0]; and 2003 [4.9].

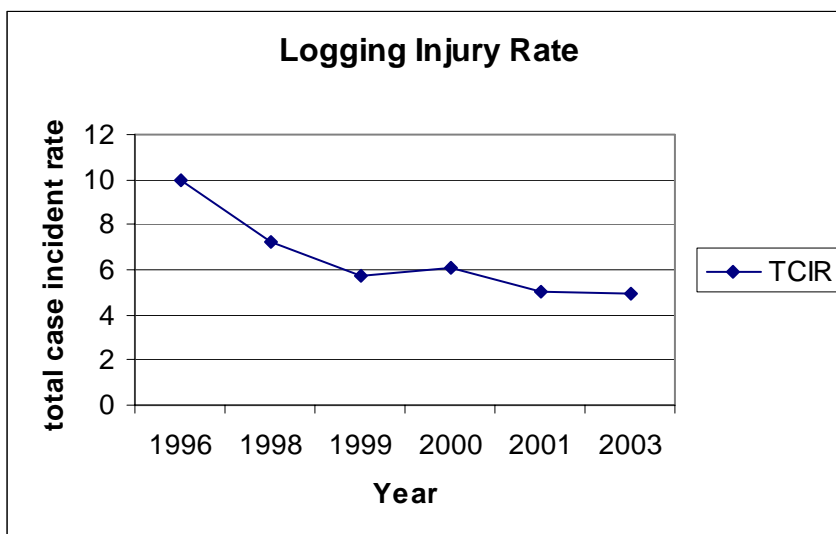


Fig. 1: Total Case Incident Rate for mechanized logging operations in the South, 1996-2003.

DISCUSSION: The injury rate for mechanized logging operations in the South has fallen significantly since 1996, and continues to remain at an historic low. Consider that in 1990, the TCIR for the logging industry, as calculated by the U.S. Labor Department, was 19.0. Increased

mechanization (resulting in less manual chain saw work), increased safety training, safety improvements in machine design, and a general increase in logging “professionalism” have all played a role in this impressive eight-year drop in logging injuries.

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FRA STAFF COMMENT: Virginia Tech’s ongoing logging safety research program would not be possible without the critical support and cooperation of the National Timber Harvesting and Transportation Safety Foundation, FRA’s Southwide Safety Committee, and cooperating WCI providers Amerisafe, Davis-Garvin, Forestry Mutual and Manry-Rawls.

Reviewed by:

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