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SAFETY ALERT

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LOADER BOOM NOT GROUNDED DURING REFUELING

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BACKGROUND: A logging crew member was assisting with knuckleboom loader refueling at a log deck on a winter day in the Southeast.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The crew member was in his mid 50s and had been, at one time, part owner of his own logging business. He was experienced in logging, having worked in the business for many years.

UNSAFE ACT AND CONDITION: With a log in the grapple and the boom in the air, the loader ran out of fuel. The loader operator and the crew member then began refueling the loader and preparing to restart it. The boom (with the log still in the grapple) began losing pressure and slowly descended. Eventually, it came to rest temporarily on the frame of the machine. The two men remained in the vicinity of the suspended log.

ACCIDENT: The log came to rest on the frame. However, the pressure continued to drop in the hydraulic cylinder, and within a short time, the boom slipped off the frame, and the log struck the crew member.

INJURY: The force of the blow caused a compound fracture of the crew member's femur. The early prognosis was poor, with amputation being a possibility, but at last report the leg was improving and recovery was continuing.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Make sure that all logging machinery is properly maintained and fueled.
- While running out of fuel in itself is not a hazard, it can create hazards. Climbing on machines to bleed fuel lines and prime the fuel pump brings its own hazards.
- Don't work under or near machines that have suspended booms and loads.
- Always fully release hydraulic pressure from suspended booms and loads prior to working on equipment. If equipment does not have sufficient bleeding valves, have them installed.
- Always use proper personal protective equipment for the task, and only undertake maintenance under safe conditions.

Reviewed by:

Rick Meyer

Appalachian/Southeastern Region Manager

Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.