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SAFETY ALERT

07-S-9

DEAD TREE INJURES WORKER WHILE FELLING

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www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/07-S-9.html

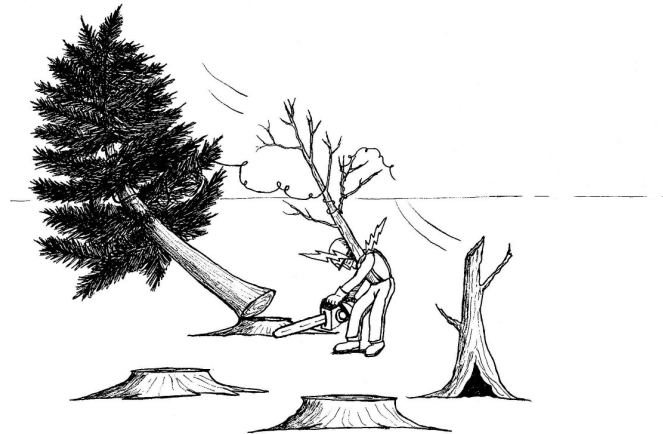
BACKGROUND: A feller-buncher operator decided to fell trees manually after his machine broke down on clear, spring day in the South. The logging firm was harvesting a natural stand of mixed products on flat terrain.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The 40-year-old machine operator had worked for the company for one year but had 20 years of logging experience. He was fully trained in logging safety and was wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). He rarely operated a chain saw because the logging crew was fully mechanized.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION: The operator did not completely evaluate potential hazards and unsafe conditions. The tree the operator was felling had a vine running from the top of the tree to a dead tree directly behind the position he had taken to fell the tree.

ACCIDENT: As the tree fell, the vine attached to it and the dead tree caused the top of the dead tree to break loose and fall on the operator. The top of the dead tree struck the operator on the side of his head, directly on his shoulder and left side of his body.

INJURY: The operator sustained a fractured shoulder, two fractured ribs and a concussion. He had to undergo surgery to repair the fractured shoulder and missed eight months of work.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION: Chain saw operators should always fully evaluate the scene to identify potential hazards and unsafe conditions. OSHA requires manual fellers to look for overhead hazards and fell “hazard” trees, by mechanical means if necessary.

Even though a logging crew may be fully mechanized, breakdowns to felling machines and processors do occur. Logging crew members should receive chain saw safety training if there is any possibility they will operate a chain saw. Chain saws should only be operated by trained individuals.

Reviewed by:
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Southcentral Region Manager

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