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SAFETY ALERT

08-S-1

CHIP TRAILER UNCOUPLES AND OVERTURNS

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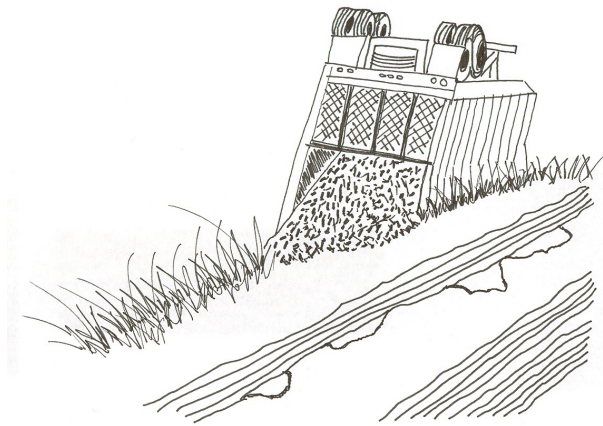
www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/08-S-1.html

BACKGROUND: A truck driver was pulling a loaded chip trailer on a woods road on a winter morning in the Southeast. The road was wet from recent rains.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The truck driver had several years of experience. When he returned to the job, he unhooked his empty chip trailer and then hooked his tractor to a setout chip trailer that was already loaded with chips.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION: After he backed the truck cab under the trailer, he did not ensure that the kingpin had been properly coupled.

ACCIDENT: As he drove down the woods road toward the public highway, the chip trailer uncoupled, and its momentum carried it to the edge of the road where it overturned in a drainage ditch. No personnel were injured, but the chip trailer suffered extensive damage.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION: All truck drivers and those jockeying setout trailers should inspect the fifth wheel to ensure that the jaws and locking mechanism are in the coupled position. A physical examination of the trailer during a “walk-around” inspection (to check condition of lights, tires, etc.) may also be done after hooking up to the trailer.

Improperly coupled trailers present personal injury hazards. The trailer could have uncoupled on a public highway or it could have turned over and injured a worker.

Reviewed by:

Rick Meyer

Appalachian/Southeastern Region Manager