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SAFETY ALERT

08-S-11

HARVESTER BOOM STRIKES OVERPASS

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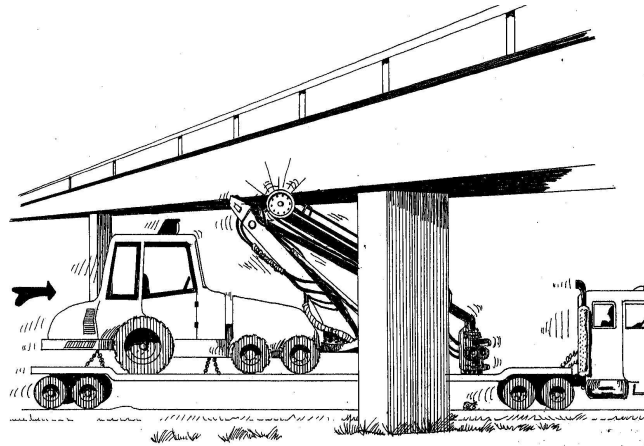
www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/08-s-11.html

BACKGROUND: A mechanical harvester owner was using a contract trucker's lowboy to haul his machine to the next job. It was a clear winter day in the Appalachians, with good road conditions and normal traffic flow.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: Both the harvester owner and the truck driver were in their early thirties and had experience loading and moving harvesting equipment.

UNSAFE ACTS: The owner and contract trucker loaded the machine on the trailer and chained everything down except the boom. After their visual inspection, they were sure that the boom was no higher than the height of the truck's cab. They proceeded to travel to the next job on the main state highway, with the owner of the machine following in his pickup truck.

ACCIDENT: The truck approached the overpass traveling at 50 miles per hour. When the machine started under the bridge, the owner in the pickup observed the hose reel on the machine slam violently into the bridge, breaking off a piece about 6 inches by 6 inches. The driver transporting the machine never felt the impact and kept moving at a steady pace. The machine remained secured to the trailer and never appeared to be loose.



INJURY: The driver eventually came to a train overpass and stopped to check the height of the machine. Then he realized the damage. The owner and driver determined that the table to which the boom was secured had drifted up into a leveling position that was "over height." The damage to the boom was mostly minor and could be fixed with a welding torch.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION: Both the owner and driver understood that if they had chained the boom down before leaving the job, then the hydraulics would not have leaked off and allowed the table to move the boom into a higher position. (Accessory equipment, such as hydraulic booms and blades, must be completely lowered and secured to the lowboy.) Also, a dry run with the pickup truck should have been made to measure, if necessary, the height of all overpasses along the truck's route—it always pays to err on the side of caution. It can also be prudent to "over secure" logging equipment for transport if in doubt about required tiedowns.

Reviewed by:

Rick Meyer

Appalachian/Southeastern Region Manager

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