

HAZARD ALERT

TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION ARE VITAL IN WOODLANDS OPERATIONS

A terrible tragedy occurred in a conventional logging operation, resulting in the death of a skidder operator and severe psychological stress for a tree feller.

Both men had worked in the woods for most of their lives. They were close friends: they worked as a team for several years in many remote locations, working, travelling and occasionally living in a camp environment together.

On the day of the incident, they began working in a new block of large hardwoods, after moving their skidder into the area earlier that morning. The feller saw a dead standing tree and made a straight cut at its base, rather than notching the tree. The tree remained standing. He moved away from it without marking it or asking the skidder to push it down, and continued cutting another tree farther away.

Meanwhile, the skidder operator came to pick up other trees. He saw the dead standing tree and did not try to push it down with his skidder. Instead, he left the skidder's cab and began placing slings around the butts of other felled trees on the ground. It is believed that a small gust of wind pushed the dead, standing tree over, causing it to fall and strike the skidder operator, killing him instantly.

The feller came around to check on his co-worker and found him dead under the tree. Responders at the scene found the feller extremely distressed.

Always remove all known hazards. Have a cutting plan and stick to it. Most importantly, maintain clear communications. Your life, and your co-workers', depend on it.

Recommended Preventive Action

- Dead, standing trees should be identified and pushed to the ground by skidders before work begins.
- If a tree cannot be felled by a skidder and must be cut by hand, fellers should notch trees properly and ensure they fell them completely to the ground. If a loose branch is hanging from a dead tree, workers must stay away from it completely.
- Any dangerous trees that are to be left standing should be clearly marked with ribbons. All workers must stay out of the marked area, and no trees can be felled into the marked area.

