



Idaho Logging Safety News

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LOGGERS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES TO HAVE "ONE OF THOSE DAYS"!



An experienced operator who was described as "a heck of a good hand", had one of those days you loggers think were made only for yourselves.

After driving up the ramp to the designated spot, the operator lifted the mouthful of logs to the correct height so he could travel the last few feet to feed the logs into the mill. As he started to travel that last little bit, he spotted an "object" in his path that he considered to be a potential safety concern. He called on the radio to another machine and asked if his co-worker would remove the object, which was the right decision.

The operator then backed down the ramp to let the other machine around, with his load still raised. When he hit level ground, over on her nose she went. The operator kept his cool and got everything shut down and stayed put until help arrived.

Within a few minutes the yard boss and the other operators secured the machine and removed the operator with no injury. They then got the machine upright with no damage.

I am not going to mention which mill yard this happened in, but I will say it is one of the most efficient and safest in the state. The log truck drivers tell me that this log yard crew are as good as it gets unloading and getting them back on the road. If you get bragged on by log truck drivers, OH MAN, you're doing something right!

LOGGING SAFETY GUYS

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SORTING LOGS IS SORT OF A PAIN.....(and can raise some safety issues too)

By Galen Hamilton

Some of the older lumberjacks around the state tell me there was actually a time when you loaded the log truck with whatever logs were in the deck, no matter the size or species, and sent them down the road to the mill. For us younger fellows, this is just hard to believe. It seems like there has been some type of log sorting as long as I can remember. Something like, “anything over so many inches goes here and the rest under that size goes there”, or “Pine and the rest goes to that sawmill except for Doug Fir, it goes to other mill”. My point is that sorting logs has been around for quite a while, but not anything like what is required these days.

With the industry changing the way it has over the last few years, you loggers are now required to sort logs two or three times more than ever before. This is not really a problem, all it takes is a lot of extra room, a whole bunch more time and log truck drivers with a lot of patience...simple!

In actuality, I haven't seen an overabundance of any of the last three items I just listed lately, so I would like to remind everybody of some of the safety concerns log sorting creates.

The loaders are traveling back and forth more, and further, than ever before. With people working on the ground and the operators having limited vision, the chance of having someone struck is a real possibility.

With so many sorts, loader operators have logs stuck in every open spot. When a person is trying to deck a log or pick one up to load, a little extra bump can send something rolling toward anyone in the area. If a trucker is hooking up his hoses or a landing man is finishing bucking a log, maybe just take a little break until they are in the clear.

Again, with logs decked everywhere, it is probably more important than ever for the truckers to stay out of the way while they are being loaded. I know you are sick of hearing it from me, but if you have to go back by the load **LET THE LOADER OPERATOR KNOW!**

With the loaders traveling back and forth so much, it gives a driver time to get to the back of their load and paint numbers....**NOT!**

Oh, and for you loader operators that are packing the logs back and forth on that new eight inches of snow and the road appears to be looking more shiny and like ice every trip you make, it is! If this is your first winter up in the cab of a track machine and she starts sliding sideways toward the bank, I promise it is an experience you will not soon forget.

O.K., I'll get off my soap box now. As usual, you loggers are doing jobs out there that regular people wouldn't even attempt, and you are doing them safely. But, these “reminders” I listed above are from horrible accidents we have had in the past, and I don't want them to happen to any of you.

Keep up the good work and next time, we will cover having 14 loads of short logs in the deck to go along with those 5 long logs — and don't be doubling any of those shorties!!!!

DO THEY TAKE PICK-UPS FOR PULP?



I don't care how long you have worked in the woods, there isn't anything funnier than a timber faller tipping a tree across their own pickup, oh, unless you happen to be the afore mentioned timber faller!

"I couldn't believe it. She was leanin heavy that way but I was sure she would go right down the draw. I started the backcut and POP, she broke off and away she went. I knew it as soon as she went!"

We are giving this timber faller a little trouble because he is a good guy and a good faller, so hopefully he'll take it in stride!!!

We will also use the picture above to remind all of you loggers that trees don't always go exactly where they are supposed to. The next time you get sent back to pick up a few trees around the yarder or you realize you are getting a little close to your sawing partner when finishing out a strip, please think about this!



Long time Finke Logging trucker Marvin Watts (left) and Dabco Logging's rigging man Chance Charley are 2 good examples of why we are proud of the people who work in the Logging Industry here in Idaho



I thought you retired Marvin? "I did, three different times, but those Finkes keep calling me and telling me to be under the loader by 4 A M!!!"

"My goal is to get everything set so the skidding crew is never held up. I also keep an eye on the rigging for any damage. Nobody wants to see anyone get hurt".

AN EXPERIENCED IDAHO LOGGER GIVES US SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

I was talking to a fellow the other day and he told me that one of his friends from out of state got two of his fingers chopped off in an accident. He said that the guy hadn't taken all of the necessary steps to safely complete the project he was working on. This got us to talking about how often people take short cuts and after awhile it becomes a habit until the day comes when they get hurt. We both compared our experiences with shortcuts and our scars from taking them, and decided we were lucky from having learned our lessons without losing more skin than we already had. This led us to talk about people we knew that had lost more than us, even some that had lost their lives. It is kind of sobering when you think about it. If you've been around awhile, chances are you know a few.

Talking about it kind of shook me up a little bit when I realized how many of my friends and co-workers had been banged up over the years in this sport we call logging. The more we talked the more I realized that not taking the proper steps (short cuts) or in a lot of the accidents not taking enough steps to get into the clear, were the cause. Sometimes we see someone doing something and all we say is "someday you're going to get hurt doing that", and we don't really talk to them about what they are doing wrong. A lot people are uncomfortable actually telling someone else how to do things, but sometimes its for the best. So if you see someone out there taking shortcuts or maybe staying too close to the stump or just not taking enough steps to get clear of a drag, take the time to point it out to them. Chances are they are eventually going to get hurt, and no one wants that to happen.

Thanks for the letter, we couldn't of written it any better!

MORE INFO FROM ANOTHER IDAHO LOGGER ON A BROKEN CABLE

We had the poured socket pendent lines that keep the boom on the swing yarder aloft fail at the top of the boom. Lucky for us, no one was in harms way and nothing was damaged in the fall.

After looking at the broken lines we determined that they were replaced 3 years ago and had rust damage that weakened the wire strands. The problem we figured out may have been that when we lowboy the yarder to the shop at breakup the boom is laid down on the boom rest and the road mist which has deicer in it is picked up by the three trailer axles and permeates into the strands of the cable and speeds up the rusting process in turn weakening the wire.

So if you haul your equipment on the wet roads in the winter months beware of the rust in your boom lines. A flushing with fresh water and a little grease on the cables may be a life saver down the road.

Again, thanks for the information. We all know what the deicer does to scale and light plugs, so this makes sense!



LOOKING AT SOME LOGGING ACCIDENTS

Remember, when we look at accidents that loggers have had, we are doing so to learn from them. We hope we never offend anyone in the process. It is our goal to use these accidents to remind the rest of us that logging is a very unforgiving business.

ACCIDENT 1

An experienced timber faller was severely injured when he was struck by part of the white fir snag he was falling. The snag struck a green tree on its way to the ground, breaking in half. The top half of the snag fell straight down, then tipped backed toward the stump, hitting the faller with what appeared to be a direct blow.

At last report, the logger appears to be paralyzed from the waist down with an assortment of other serious injuries.



EQUIPMENT OPERATOR COMES IN FOR A HARD LANDING

2 things being discussed by the crew since the accident are: Do lighter weight machines tend to slide easier on this type of surface? And yes, ice grousers do tear up the deck, but they will be on all their crawlers from now on!

ACCIDENT 2

A timber faller received a broken arm when a “chunk” came out of the tree he was falling. The tree was entwined with a couple of other standing trees and the faller believed that it broke some limbs when his tree started to go.

ACCIDENT 3

A very experienced equipment operator received serious injuries when the dozer he was unloading off of a flat bed truck slid, landing on its side. The result was a femur bone broken in 2 places, a forearm broken in 30 places, an amount of pain that he never wants to feel again, over 8 hours spent in surgery, months of rehabilitation and, as the fellow says, an arm that isn't going to be what it once was.

A few little things led up to the big thing. The fellow said that there was a bit of dirt on the bed and they had been getting some wet weather so things were a little slick. He backed the truck up to the unloading spot and it was a little sidling, but not much. After unchaining the crawler, he put her in gear to unload. It shot sideways so fast he didn't have time to spit. The truck bed was quite high, allowing the crawler to turn clear on its side before striking the ground. A fellow that witnessed the mishap reported that, “*the crawler hit the ground so hard, it bounced!*”

The operator was very open about the accident and encouraged us to write it up in hopes that it may prevent an accident of this type down the road.

***A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT NOW THAT THE SNOW IS UP TO YOUR.....
KNEE (what did you think I was going to write?)***

EMERGENCY RESCUE — Give those emergency plans the once over. Getting medical help to a hurt logger in a hurry is always important, but this time of the year it can truly be “life saving”. Make sure you have CLEAR road directions to your logging job. If your job is “socked in” and the helicopter can’t fly, the ground ambulance is the answer, but it has to know which road to take! A couple of years ago a logging company filled out their road directions *before* it started snowing. When they had an accident and those directions were being given, several of the roads being described had been closed for the winter! The rescue effort was delayed significantly.

I know you are tired of us talking about *LATITUDE and LONGITUDE*, but boy is it important. We recently had an accident where the company did not have the coordinates. Luckily, one of the loggers on the job knew the area very well. Going through State Comm, he was able to guide the helicopter to their logging job using drainages and landmarks. The logger (along with the people at State Comm) did a whale of a job getting the medical help to the scene, but later said it would of saved some time and lessened the stress load a whole bunch by having the *LAT and LONG!*

FIRST AID KITS — Take a second to dig it out from behind the loader seat, knock the dust off and take a look inside. We did get a call from a logger recently reporting he pulled an air splint out of his kit to attend to a broken ankle (*family picnic, not logging*). When he started to unfold the splint it literally fell into pieces. He thought having his first aid kit banging around in back of his pickup for the last 12 years, going from 100 degrees above to 35 below from one end of North Idaho to the other, might have had something to do with it. He could be on to something. Who are we to argue!

WOOL BLANKETS — If you don’t have some, GET THEM TODAY! Put them in some leak proof bags and let the crew know where they are at. Get those blankets between the injured logger and the ground. This time of the year it only takes a couple of minutes for the cold to start to set in making the situation dramatically

KEEPING THE ACCIDENT VICTIM WARM, BUT NOT TOO WARM!

Covering a couple of those items in the previous article reminded us to pass along some information we received from a person in the medical field. In our first aid training we have all been taught that supplying *oxygen* to someone that has been seriously hurt is a big help. Some of you have the oxygen bottles and masks, and have been trained in how to use them. Others have talked about laying a source of oxygen by the victim and let it drift by their airway. As mentioned earlier, oxygen is great help to the injured person.

The one LITTLE problem that might sprout up doing this is getting a mite close to a flame. What ignited us to cover this topic was a story about a person wearing their oxygen supply. Apparently when he went over to check his wood stove and the flame hit that pure oxygen, things went *KABOOM!* Hopefully the person will make a full recovery.

So, if you are tending an injured logger this winter and are thinking about moving him over by the warming fire while your waiting for the ambulance, you might want to take notice where the oxygen hose is at! It was also mentioned that lighting up a smoke may not be a good move either.

SAFETY ALERT — CAUTION: Setting Auto Repeat to “None” will essentially disable the selection from feeding any length of log through if it accidentally pushed. Take action when you first notice a problem, don’t wait for it to become an incident.



A Dangle Head Processor was working on a yarder landing. The carrier was a Link Belt 6000 outfitted with a Waratah 626BigWood head. Due to the configuration of the landing the operator was decking export logs to his right and then processing the domestic wood back to his left where it could be passed to the loading shovel. When the incident occurred the operator grabbed a tree length log from the chute and swung it to his right at which time he cut a 40 ft. export log that was 10" in diameter on the small end. He then swung the machine back to the left towards the yarder to finish processing the log. The operator stated that he was looking to the left as he swung, he then heard a noise and almost instantaneously the end of the log came through his side window, passing through the cab and out the rear window narrowly missing the operator. As the log passed through the cab it came in contact with the right hand joy-stick forcing it downward which caused the main boom to activate forcing the processing head to the ground. When the head hit the ground it broke the log into three separate pieces. There was a 17 ft. long piece stuck through the cab that had broken off where it was pinched between the cab guard and the main boom cylinder, a 10 ft. piece that had been between the cab and the processing head, and a 5 foot piece that was still in the head.

We received this through an E-Mail and thought it was worth passing along!



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