Idaho Logging Safety News

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"IT'S UPSIDE DOWN IN THE CREEK BOSS, BUT I AIN'T NO WUSSIE!"

By Mont Biggers

I know we have said this before but I think it's worth repeating. If there is any doubt or if you are uncomfortable with the road conditions, just put the chains on. I have already heard stories this year about stuck trucks and near misses just because the truck drivers didn't want to be considered wussies.

Remember, the first few trucks off the hill or up the hill may have very well polished it up for the next guy. Sometimes road conditions get better after the first few trucks, but a lot of times they get worse!

That driver that is on the radio telling everyone they made it with no chains when conditions are iffy might very well change his tune if he was the 5th or 6th guy out.

All trucks and loads of logs handle differently. If you have driven several different trucks odds are you have noticed differences in the way they got around. Just the way your truck handles or the way you are loaded can make a big difference; it's not always about your "skill level".

I have yet to hear a truck owner tell a driver " It's OK that you tore up my truck because you didn't chain up, I'm just glad no one thinks you're a wussie."

TERRY "BEAR" STREETER SAFETY REMINDER

With the snowmobilers and late season hunters, it is really important to have your SIGNS up at all times of operation. I know it is a pain in the neck, especially this time of the year and it doesn't make it easier when they are being stolen everywhere around the state. Maybe try putting them up high or out away from reach making them harder to steal. Some crews have told me they are taking their signs home at night. I guess it is whatever it takes.

I'LL JUST CLIMB UP HERE WITH THE TORCH AND THAW OUT….AWWWWWWW OUCH!

By Terry Streeter

Working on broken down equipment sometimes leads to accidents, especially in the winter. Cold weather tests your machines to the limit and if anything is going to fail, it will probably happen this time of the year...and it won't be at the shop! *Preventive Maintenance* on your machinery is always the best way to avoid mechanical problems and may also help avoid an accident or two along the way.

Now I've heard on this new equipment that if anything is wrong the computer will tell a logger what to do, but maybe you could still check out a few things on your own.

***Add alcohol to your air systems tanks unless you have air dryers.**
***Drain your water separators before they freeze.**
***Clean out your belly pans.**
***Check for cracks in wires so the salt does not get to them and that they have enough slack when ice builds up on them. (Already there is talk about corrosion on wiring on trucks and trailers so try and wash them when you can)**
***Make sure the seat belts are there and are in working order.**
***Add an extra blanket in the pickup.**
***Make sure your CB (big radio, SMR, cell phone, etc.) is working and can be understood.**
***Allow more time to get to work. I know that is cruel to say to a truck driver, but the idea is to get there!**
***Check on crew members that are "separated" from you more often.**
***Make sure that you have the red book filled out and it has the <u>present</u> job info.**

Hopefully this will help keep your equipment working instead of the crew working on your equipment.

KEEPING YOUR EMERGENCY LANDING ZONES CLEARED

You loggers have been doing a great job recording your longitude and latitude when moving onto a new strip and establishing landing zones in case we need to get a medical helicopter on site. Winter, as with every other aspect of logging, can have a big effect on these areas.

In the cities, six inches of snow pretty well brings everything to a stand still. Out on the logging job you might get three feet and you lumberjacks just keep on going. The trouble is you can land a helicopter in six inches of snow, but not three feet!

If the designated area is on the road, remind the grader operator to keep that plowed out. If you established that landing zone before the snow arrived it might not work now that winter is here. If you have an area that you "think" will work, pick another area as a backup, just in case. Anything you can do *before* an accident makes things A LOT easier. Just ask the people that have been through it.

I suppose if the helicopter does get stuck you can hook onto it with the D6 and give it a pull. I wonder what the pilot would say when he saw you pulling the bull line down over the hill!

PROFESSIONAL TIMBER FALLER, BILL FREYTAG, PASSES ALONG SOME GOOD IDEAS!

By Stan Leach

Bill was working for ***Jerry Gorbett Logging*** near the upper end of the Palouse River on this cold, sunshiny day. He knew the winter weather was coming so he had attached a piece of old raincoat to his hardhat with duct tape to keep the snow off his neck, and had screwed a piece of leather to the base of his axe handle. He said that it helps prevent it from slipping out of his hands while wedging.

Bill was doing a good safe job of cleaning up some hard to reach edges of the strip. The timber appeared to be short and scattered, but Bill said it was limby and crooked to make up for it.

If we had a way to bottle up that "experience" I know a bunch of contractors that would buy it!

WHOA, THAT WAS CLOSE!!!!!!!!!!

By Galen H.

Mont wrote a good article on the front page about why a person should throw some chains, and it reminded me of some good tips a driver shared with me last winter.

The first was to remind people that when you are out of the truck and are going to pop around the end of the load or go around the front of the truck, take a quick peek before stepping out. The wide spots in the woods are pretty narrow this time of the year and the man wagon might be coming by just at the wrong time or, if you are out on the pavement, some of the general public seems to travel at a high rate of speed while skimming by within inches of your truck.

His other tip was on the same important topic. When you are on that second trip and are coming out from hooking up the inside rail, take that quick peek to make sure the snow plow isn't barreling by…..finally!

If you have to do some maintenance such as adjusting brakes, fixing tire chains, working on wiring, etc., make sure you have the truck on the level the best you can. Over the years we have had some "weird" accidents (some fatal) when those trucks slip a little or roll off after the driver sets the brakes and gets out.

Thanks to that experienced driver that shared these good ideas. You guys keep teaching me this stuff and in another 20 years I'll be quite nowlig...knuoled….nuolidgabl….SMART! 10-4

LUMBERJACKS TAKE THEIR FIRST STEPS TOWARD GIANT MOVIE CARREERS!

Once we drive up in the logging safety pickup and pull out the video cameras, those loggers push each other out of the way to be first on the film. Well, that may not be quite true. Actually, we had one timber faller just about run over us when he was "escaping" from the *filming location*...true story!

So, when we have a crew agree to help us out in making a training video for the spring classes it is *GREATLY APPRECIATED!* One positive feature in shutting down a logging crews production for a half an hour is that the owner of the company usually makes a perfect candidate for the "*heart problem"* video.

Matt Bryson, Joe Bryson (woods boss), Bud Wagner and David Bryson are part of Neil Canaday Logging out of Emmett. Matt and David are Joe's boys so they don't listen to him and Bud has been operating logging equipment for the last 50 years so he can't hear so well. Joe says he talks to himself a lot!

Jake Stephenson, John Stuart, Joe Calaprice and Cory Supak pose in front of one of Cory's trucks that should have been at the mill an hour ago! When we got Supak's logging crew lined back up for "take 27", Cory started being funny by chewing on a skidder tire and banging his head on the dozer. What a jokester!

ANOTHER BEAR STREETER REMINDER

In the woods Ice Bits are a must for track machines. Some loggers tell me they don't put on many because the lowboy drivers say they tear up the decks. I think it would be better to have a mad lowboy driver than a piece of equipment slide off in the woods.

A REAL GOOD REASON TO CHECK OUT YOUR SAFETY EQUIPMENT!

By Stan Leach

I had an interesting conversation with a former logger the other day. Once he found out that I worked for the Logging Safety Program he had lots of stories to tell. The one I will relay here had to do with a close call he had years ago while rigging an intermediate support. He had to climb a long ways up in a tamarack to get the needed height for the support. When he got as high as he thought he needed to be he said he was looking around enjoying the view on a nice sunny day. The trouble started when he went to set his spurs to anchor himself. He said the right spur dug in good but as he went to dig in with the left, the spur broke off. The momentum of this pulled him around the tree pulling his right spur out. Now a lot of things go through your mind at a time like this. He said that he was young and bulletproof at the time so he didn't always use a climbing rope , just gripped the tree with his hands because it was faster. He said in that fraction of a second he couldn't remember if he had tied off with the rope.

Gravity is your friend when you are trying to fall trees but not so much when you are climbing them. The rapid acceleration downward was slowed only slightly by his death grip with arms and legs. He was getting tore up from contact with the tree and was about to turn loose and fall when the rope that he had in fact tied off came tight and stopped his descent. It took awhile he said to gather himself and work his way on down the tree.

Once on the ground he said it took longer to stop shaking. When he did stop he was checking out the broken spur. He said there was an obvious old crack in the metal that he would have seen had he looked before starting up the tree. His advise to all of you still working in the woods is to take a couple minutes to really check out all your safety equipment because your life depends on it.

SOME SUPRISES AREN'T THAT FUNNY!!!!

By Stan Leach

I talked to a faller recently that had two close calls in one day. He was cutting for a line machine and was almost up to the road, when he noticed that the last two trees for that line were undercut. Closer inspection revealed that they were sawed up in the back as well with only a small amount of holding wood left.

These were two fairly decent sized fir trees with most of the limbs gone on the uphill side. It appeared that the guy cutting the rite-of–way had tried to use another tree or two to push these trees over and somehow they ended up getting left standing. These trees had been standing in this condition for over a year and the sawyer had been working within their reach for an hour. He said one close call was working under an unsafe tree but the other one was the near heart attack he almost had when he realized it!

Anybody that has fell trees for very long has been in a situation where they had to use another tree to safely bring down a problem tree, but the practice of domino falling several trees at once is against the rules and should be avoided. You have no control of the situation once that first tree breaks over center, and the more trees that are sawed up the more chances you have for something to go wrong.

Don't take chances trying to save a couple of minutes; YOUR LIFE IS WORTH MORE THAN THAT!

1910.266 (h) (1) (ix)

Domino felling of trees is prohibited.

Note to paragraph: The definition of domino felling does not include the felling of a single danger tree by felling another single tree into it.

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HAVE A GOOD ESCAPE ROUTE, YOU NEVER KNOW WHICH WAY YOU WILL HAVE TO GO...

By Mont Biggers

This time of year it can be a little harder to get away from the stump. Slick, muddy or snowy hillsides can slow a faller down or even trip them up. A little extra time picking out a good escape route could pay off big. Sometimes we don't think about this until the snow is getting pretty deep but any delay getting away from the stump could prove to be costly.

As a side note, I have noticed that some fallers that told me all summer that chaps were uncomfortable, dangerous, the worst thing ever invented and an overall pain to wear are now explaining to me that chaps are the greatest thing ever. I guess its that time of year. Amazing.

Just keep in mind to slow things down a bit and prepare for tougher conditions before something bad happens.

IDAHO MINIMUM SAFETY STANDARDS FOR LOGGING
Standard 010. Falling and Bucking

i. In falling timber, adjacent brush and/or snow shall be cleared away from and around the tree to be felled to provide sufficient room to use saws and axes and provide an adequate escape path.

ANOTHER BEAR REMINDER

You ONE man operations need to fill out a couple of Safety Book Pages and leave it with someone at home or in town. Then they know how to find you if you do not check in or come home for a few days!

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