

# *Idaho Logging Safety*

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## **What's Been Happening???**

By Galen Hamilton

I ran into a “seasoned” fellow the other day that spent many years in the Idaho woods logging. He said he had been out of logging for twenty five years but was really curious how things were going these days. I told him it seemed like the loggers were wallowing in mud most of the spring and then in, what seemed overnight, the dust was up to their knees. I told him that the trees seemed smaller and the limbs bigger and there wasn't an over abundance of dollars being spread around. I talked about how hard and dangerous the work was and how I marveled at how the loggers accomplished what they did. After hearing me out, the old logger smiled great big, put a weathered hand on my shoulder and said, “Sounds like things haven't changed one bit”!

The summer months did not have a good start. We had two fatalities here in Idaho, each, as always, was so very sad. It obviously hurts the families and friends but it also makes the whole industry “ache” as word spreads, in a way that I can't really explain. Please take a close look at the drawings inside the newsletter and go over them with the crew. If we don't learn from these tragedies, or at least get a wake up call, then shame on us.

We have also had some accidents this logging season. While the number is low (thanks to your efforts) a few have been very serious. I know I sound like a broken record here BUT, the companies that went through some of these accidents had an emergency rescue plan “sorta” in place, and all of them said the same thing. “I wish the heck we would have been better prepared”. If you think you will get the coordinates of your job and figure out who to call when you have a logger hurt on the side of a mountain, forget about it. There are just too many things to do besides that. That comes not from me, but other Idaho loggers that went through it this summer. Something you might want to think about.

Two other quick thoughts and then you can go back to greasing the skidder. You will notice when you read about the accidents that just about all of them involved very experienced people. I always thought that if you put in enough years in the woods you became “exempt” when it came to getting hurt. I guess I was wrong.

Lastly, there has always been two different times of the year we seem to have a “rash” of accidents; the first of the logging season and the start of hunting season. Tell the crew if they keep working hard on doing their jobs safely, you will let them off an hour early some Friday so they can shoot their elk; sort of an incentive plan!

Keep up the good work and LOG SAFE!

## HEY, MY OLD LOG TRUCK AIN'T STEERIN THE WAY IT USED TO!

By Monte Biggers

If you are having handling problems with your truck it can be hard to find the cause sometimes. If you have checked out all of the more common things, here are some other items to take a look at.

\*\*\*Take a peek at the steering gear to the pitman arm connection. If the spline is worn or the pinch bolt is loose, causing even a little movement, you can have a wild driving truck on your hands.

\*\*\*Steering column bushings can wear out causing “binding” and hard spots in your steering. This can be mistaken for a steering gear problem.

\*\*\*On some trucks, due to the way the steering column goes through the cab, loose or worn cab mounts can cause problems.

\*\*\*Spacer blocks under the front springs can wear or break causing the front axle to be out of alignment with the rear suspension.

\*\*\*Worn or broken rear suspension parts can also effect the way a truck handles.

Just passing along a few ideas you truckers are aware of, but maybe haven't thought of in a while.



"I SAID TURN LEFT YOU 18  
WHEELED DEVI L!!!!

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## ACCIDENTS

### LET'S LEARN FROM THESE GUYS



#### ACCIDENT #1

An EXPERIENCED LOGGER was hurt when struck by a snag that was caught by the drag being skidded away from him. The jammer operator could see him but not the tree length he had hooked. After the "all clear" signal was given and the tree length started to move, it caught a SMALL snag laying in its path. The snag then "hooked" another tree causing it to "endo" around clipping the logger across both knees. The knee taking the brunt of the impact took some pretty significant surgery to repair.

The accident happened on the last drag of the day. The crew had gotten a late start on the job and had been working long days trying to meet the jobs deadline. Fatigue could have contributed to the accident. Whatever the reason, this logger's hooking career could be over and being a man short will make it even harder to get the job done on time.

#### ACCIDENT #2

An EXPERIENCED LOGGER luckily avoided what could have been serious injuries when he fell off a piece of machinery he was working on. A hose had blown and had sprayed hydraulic oil over a good part of the cab. After fixing the hose the logger was wiping up the mess on the windows so he could see out of his machine. When he stepped onto a piece of tin work he said his feet were out from under him instantly.

He landed square on his head "without even time to get my hands up to catch myself". He will be sore for a month or two but thought himself lucky to land on some soft dirt instead of on one of the stumps or rocks that covered most of the area.

#### ACCIDENT #3

Another EXPERIENCED LOGGER was seriously hurt when a SMALL tree came back hitting him on the head smashing a vertebrae in his neck.

He was working very hard to get the trees he was falling to lie in the same direction to make it easier for the crew working behind him. He fell a tree brushing a small one on its way to the ground. He didn't like the way the second tree looked so he was going to walk up the hill a ways, then back to the tree so he wouldn't be walking directly toward it, and fall it. He thought he was keeping a close eye on the little devil but said he must have averted his eyes for a split second because the next thing he knew he was on the ground. "I never even saw it coming!"

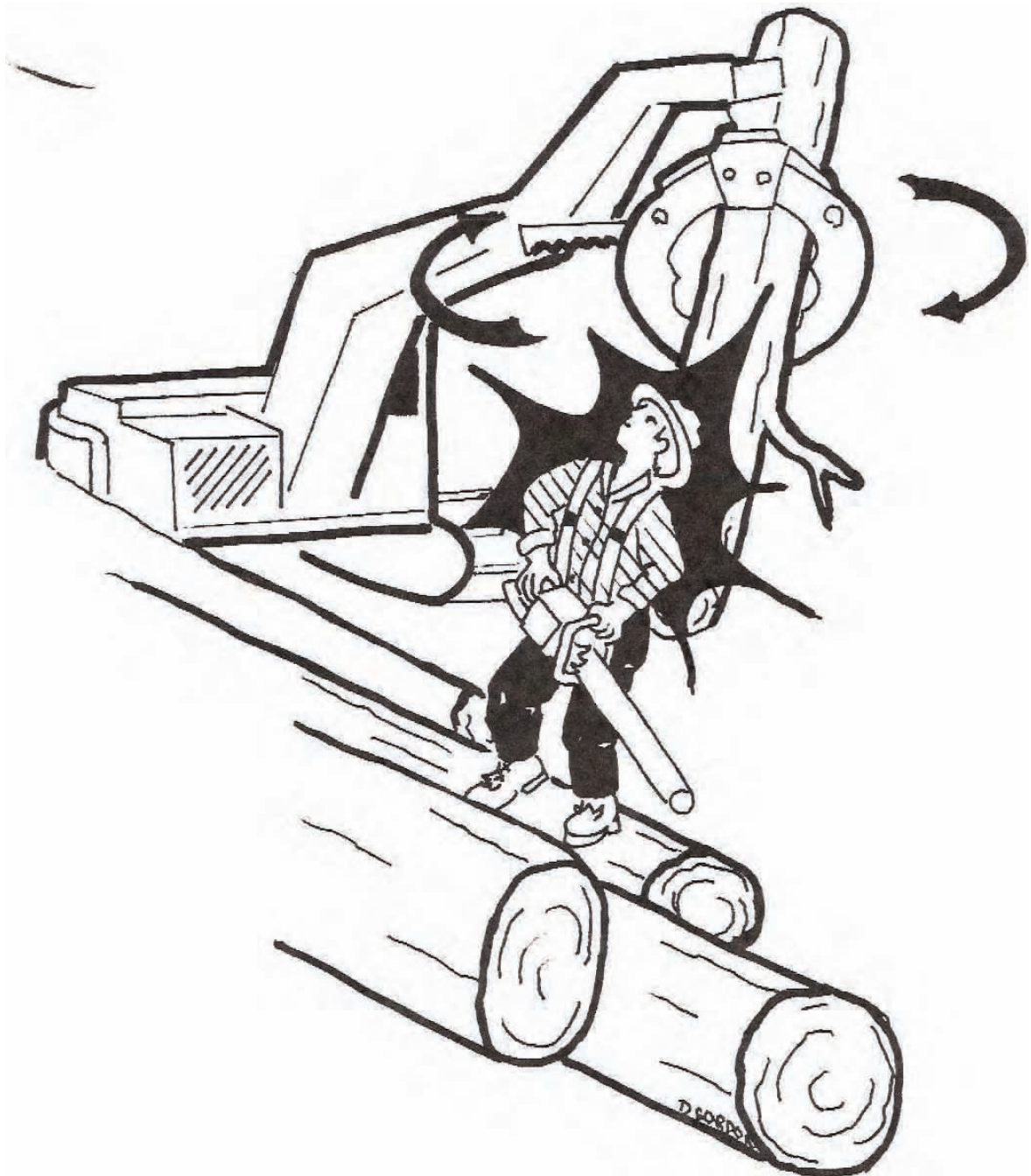
He reached up and grabbed his radio he had on his chest and called his sawing partner who got the emergency rescue underway immediately.

When his partner first got to him, the faller had no feeling on one side and below his chest. He told his buddy that he was probably paralyzed. "THE HECK YOU ARE!!!!!" responded his friend. The injured faller said he immediately started feeling tingling throughout his body. (Never argue with a determined timber faller!)

The logger was up and about in a remarkably short time. There is quite a bit of work ahead for this man to be firing on all eight cylinders but he will get there!

When talking to other timber fallers who have known this fellow for years they all said the same thing. "If it can happen to him, it can happen to any of us".

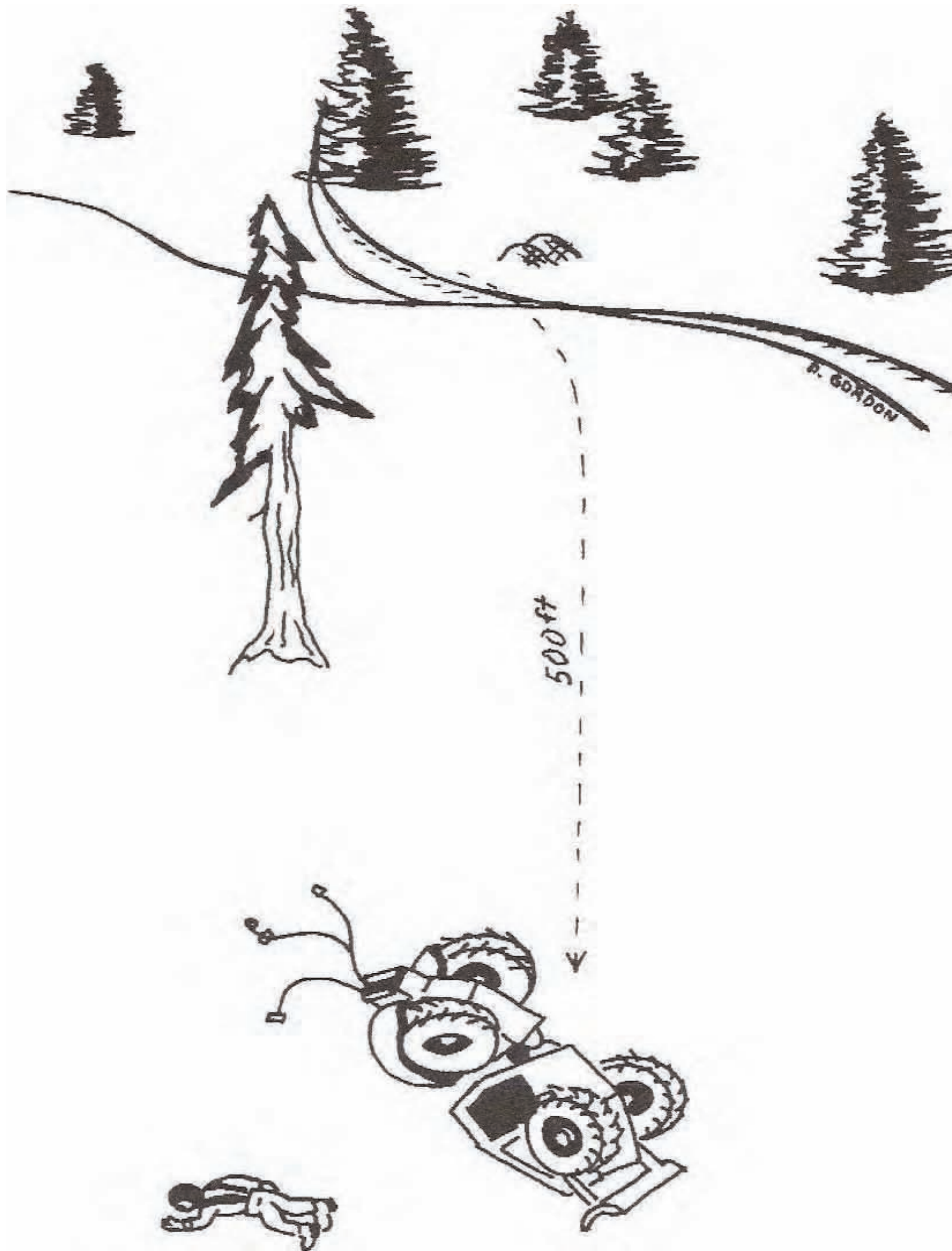
# FATALITY #1



**A LOGGER WAS FATALY INJURED WHEN HE WAS STRUCK BY A TREE LENGTH THAT WAS BEING TURNED BY THE LOADER IN THE LANDING.**

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# FATALITY #2



**A RUBBER TIRE SKIDDER OPERATOR WAS FATALY INJURED WHEN THE SKIDDER WENT OFF THE SKID TRAIL AND TUMBLED 500 FEET.**



## BLOWDOWNS CREATE “UNIQUE” SAFETY ISSUES



Vince Bonzelet, working for Mahon Logging, keeps a close eye on the root wad even though it is flat ground and the loader is securing the tree. Good job Vince! (No, he is not pinched)



Earlier this year a tornado went through an area in the central part of the state creating a massive amount of blown over trees. Although the volume amount of timber in this case was phenomenal (18 to 20 mbf) you loggers have to deal with some blowdown on just about every job you come to. As if there isn't enough to keep your eye on out there, logging blowdown adds more to the list.

There were several logging crews already at work on the privately owned ground not too long after the storm went through, and were moving wood safely and quickly.

They let me know you had to take a little extra time to figure out not only if the tree is going to move, but whether or not the root wad is going to take off or set back. Where it was possible, they were skidding the trees into the landing where the loader could help steady them.

### ACCIDENT #4

An EXPERIENCED LOGGER was struck by the butt of a tree he fell and received a fractured pelvis from the incident. The Larch tree landed between two standing trees causing the butt to flip sideways striking the faller. Most timber falling accidents occur within ten feet of the stump so it is important to have a good escape route and get in the clear.

This faller is no “green horn” having fell timber for 25 years or so, and he is very good at what he does.

### Accident #5

An EXPERIENCED LOGGER almost lost his foot when he was working on a dangle head log processor. The opposite bar was actuated and his foot was nearly severed above the ankle. Proper first aid was given and hopefully there will be a full recovery.

We hear of this type of accident quite often. It takes a little extra time, but remove the chains before work begins.

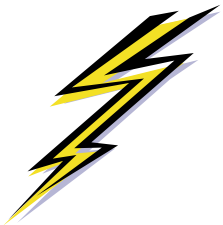
## LISTENING TO EXPERIENCE

Darrell Lyons has operated a log loader for, well, more years than he likes to think about. (Time has a way of slipping by.) After visiting with him a while back and mentioning all of the things a loader operator had to watch out for, he told me he agreed with that but pointed out something I thought worth passing along. “If people are around a loader, or any piece of machinery or timber faller for that matter, it is their responsibility not to get in a dangerous place”.

Darrell told me the first thing he would do working around a new group of loggers and truck drivers was to gather them up and **CLEARLY** explain that point of view! Not a bad idea.

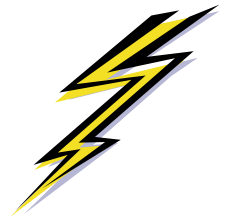


**DARREL LYONS** checks out the view from the log loader he operates for **STEVE UHLORN LOGGING**. It is a view he has enjoyed for three decades!



### NEAR MISS

A loader operator narrowly escaped injury (or worse) when the boom of the machine he was in struck a three phase power line. The logger was packing some short logs in the grapple and forgot about the low line on the ridge road they were using. He did not receive a jolt but several hydraulic lines exploded and two power lines were broken.



Ryan Bechtel, Will Burk and Gary Burk “enjoy” taking a break from the heat and getting their picture taken. The boss is the one in the shade!

**Ryan Bechtel Logging** is a small outfit that works out of Kingston, Idaho. Bechtel has some good equipment and a couple of really good hands to go with it, which is a good position to be in.

Ryan and the guys know it doesn't matter if you are a 3 man or 30 man crew, it takes everyone to get the wood out safely....which these loggers do. We appreciate the effort !



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