

# Idaho Logging Safety News

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C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor  
C. Kelly Pearce, Administrator  
Suzy Kludt, Editor

## **ONE OF THESE THREE VETERAN LUMBERJACKS IN THE PICTURE BELOW IS PULLING THE PIN, AND IT'S NOT THE TWO ON THE RIGHT**

*By Galen Hamilton*



***Cliff Osborne, Jack Wilson and Bud jaw about old times. Cliff and Jack have been in the woods for LOTS of years but in dog years, Bud puts them both to shame! You can tell by the look on Bud's face he has heard these two tell stories before.***

Cliff called the other day and told me he just read a paper that said if you get old you don't have to work anymore. It is called retirement. He then exclaimed, *"I think I qualify!"*

Cliff, along with David Kludt and Don Hull started the logging safety program all those years ago. The one thing I can truthfully say is that Cliff believes in this safety program and cares for the safety of all of you loggers way more than he ever lets on. The first day I ever met him he stated, *"this is a good idea (talking about the program) and we can make a difference"*.

From that day on, a few things have stuck out to me about Cliff. One, he knows more about logging than most people I have ever met. I have seen him time and again get an idea across to someone to help their logging job go smoother and he does it without making that person mad. Most of the time he walks away leaving a person thinking that they were the one that just came up with a darn good idea.

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*In this Issue:*

*Updates to your companies Big Radios, Ice Cleats, Guards and Hearing from Cliff One Last Time!*

## LOGGING, THEN AND NOW

By Cliff Osborne

There are loggers going to work every day that are seventy plus years old and they started out in the woods when they were in their teens. They would not have been happy working anywhere else. These individuals have seen a lot of changes in the size of timber, equipment, and safety. Lets just take log loading for instance, I asked a logger the other day if he had ever loaded logs with "PIGS FEET". This fellow was in his forties I suppose. He thought a minute and replied, "I thought pigs feet were what you ate out of the gallon jar in the bar in Weippe when you stayed too long and you knew you would not get any supper at home!"

When I started out with the Idaho Logging Safety some twenty years ago, there were a lot of logs still being loaded with cable loaders . These machines are just about a thing of the past now. I used to be pretty quick at changing a dozer cable but there doesn't seem to be much calling for that either. Logging has changed and will continue to change.

The emphasis on safety has changed too. Numerous fatalities and serious injuries were occurring every year and insurance costs were skyrocketing . The logging industry has taken a tight grip on this problem over the years. With proper training in the jobs the workers are doing and the use of safety equipment and improved machine guarding, we just don't see the accidents we once did. Loggers are also trained in CPR, first aid, and emergency rescue. The use of the GPS and helicopters for locating and transporting the injured workers has made a huge impact getting the injured workers to the proper help quickly and has saved a lot of lives.

Trees continue to grow and they need to be cut. The loggers will keep on being innovative with harvesting methods and safety improvements because that is what loggers do. Loggers are a special breed and I am proud to be part of it. Thanks, and I will see you in the woods.

### ***PULLING THE PIN (cont.)***

Clifford doesn't have to be the smartest guy in the woods. As long as loggers are working safely, he is content.

He also understands loggers, which is invaluable in doing this job. Sometimes when we have an accident, it is kind of easy to say, "what the heck was that guy thinking". Cliff always reminds us that "that guy" had been hooking logs for the last 6 hours in 90 degree heat on ground steeper than a cows face or that a truck driver put his chains on and took them off four times before most folks are out of bed or that timber faller was up with his sick kid all night or that.....well you get the picture. Cliff has been there and he reminds us of what you loggers go through.

I have learned one other thing being around Cliff. If you think you have a story that no one will ever be able to top and *he* is in the room, you might as well sit down because you are about to hear one better. After listening to his stories over the last 20 years I do have to admit, I think a couple of them might have been true!

There is one last thing I suppose I should admit. Cliff has taught me that logging safe is possible and is part of the logger's job. I think he has left that same advice with many of you. GOOD JOB CO!

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## THEY PUT THEM GUARDS ON THERE FOR A REASON!



*Jesse Hunt gets the safety guys attention pointing at a guard that might be a life saver.*

*On the left is a little closer look.*



On a recent visit to a Henderson Logging job site, Jesse Hunt grabbed my shoulder and drug me over to the processor he operates. He pointed to a guard that is attached around the sprocket of the saw on his machine and said, “Galen, you tell the loggers around the state that if there is not a guard on their machines, get one on.” Now Jesse is a fairly good size man so I thought I better do as he says!

What he was concerned about was when the chain breaks it sometimes sends chunks flying. *Chain Shot* is what they call it, and it can obviously be dangerous. Jesse told me about an accident that happened in Washington this summer when this occurred.

The accident to which he was referring resulted in a fatality. A piece of the chain went through the safety glass of the machine striking the operator in the throat, causing him to bleed to death.

*Chain Shot* occurs when a chain breaks, then as one of the ends whip around at an incredible speed, a chunk flies off. This “chunk” can be a couple of drivers or just one link. Looking into this a little deeper, it seems to occur more than I realized. Reports from a chain manufacturer say that after inspecting broken chains, about 1 in 50 have parts gone. Most of the time this apparently happens on the drive end of the bar, but can come off the tip as well.

What can we do about it? Well, Jesse’s suggestion tops the list. If your machine does not have a “sprocket guard” get one. When some of the older machines were built they did not come out with them. I am told you are able to get guards now for most machines. If the guard was taken off because it got in the way when you were changing a chain, put it back on NOW. Inspect the chain frequently removing damaged or cracked chains from service. Industry groups suggest chains be discarded after the second break. Maintain proper bar and chain lubrication and proper chain tension. Replace the drive sprocket when it has visible signs of wear.

The big thing is to keep yourself (the operator) out of the “plane” of the bar. On many processors this is not an issue, but on the dangle heads it can be. Jesse pointed out that you always make that effort to not be lined up with the bar, but sometimes when swinging around, you become lined up without realizing it.

What really caught my attention was when “bystanders” was the topic. We are seeing more and more processors on the landings where other machine operators, truck drivers and ground people are working. Keeping

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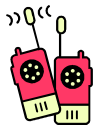
## GUARDS cont.

those folks out of the “plane” of the saw bar is quite a challenge. It was also mentioned that when a chain breaks pieces do not necessarily follow the direct path of the bar if they are deflected. Oh boy, a lot to think about.....and there is more!

As with the fatality, there have been a few other reports of those chain pieces going through machine windows that are equipped with safety glass. Reports say it does not break the glass but because of the speed the pieces are traveling it is almost like they “burn” through it. I talked to a fellow that reported he knew of loggers replacing windows with safety glass up to 1 1/8 inch thick!

While I am on the window topic, another logger mentioned that some of the machines equipped with the processor heads are sometimes an older vintage. They may not be able to crawl through the woods shovel logging anymore, but are just fine setting in a landing working up logs. If this sounds familiar, take a darn good look at those windows.

There apparently isn't a way to completely eliminate the chance of *Chain Shot*. We can lessen the chance of an accident by working on the ideas mentioned earlier, but as one manufacturer states, “*treat it as a loaded gun*”. Pretty darn good advice I would say.



## FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS ON “NARROW BANDING” WILL MOST LIKELY AFFECT YOUR LOGGING COMPANIES’ RADIOS

My first question was what the heck is *narrow banding*? Apparently the FCC is narrowing existing bands to allow room for more radio systems to be added. Will this effect your companies system? If you have VHF radios and they are above 150 MHz or UHF radios and they are above 460 MHz, YES, this effects you.

I am also told that *most* radios 6 to 8 years old or newer, should be able to be “reprogrammed”. If older, which I know many of the logging companies systems are, they will need to be replaced.

The deadline to have this done is 1-1-13, but it is suggested that you do not wait until the last minute. You will need to certify to the FCC by this date that you have made the conversion. Licensees who do not will likely be automatically terminated on the deadline date. Relicensing cancelled systems will not be an easy process and the FCC has indicated that they will not easily grant waivers for continued wideband operation after the deadline. There will be a severe monetary penalty if you continue to use your system after the deadline.

You can find more information on the *forest industrial telecommunication* website or get a hold of your radio dealer. They will know the straight skinny and get you taken care of.

As Monte wrote in his article, radios have become so valuable to your logging operation just for efficiency alone. Radios are the key to many of your emergency rescue plans, and, as Cliff mentioned in his article, those plans have saved lives! Please take the time to look into what it is going to take to get your radio system up to snuff. **10-4 good buddy!**

## ***HELLO, HELLO....IS ANYBODY THERE?***

**By Monte Biggers**

Now days it seems that everyone has a cell phone and knows exactly where it works. Most logging crews around the state use radios for communication and they also generally know where to go to “*get out*”. Some crews have CBs in every loader and skidding rig so that they can communicate with each other whenever they need to. For years, log trucks have relied on CBs and many of them now also use FM radios to talk to each other. Having good communications can lead to less downtime, a more efficient crew, a safer workplace and a quicker response in an emergency situation. My question is, with all of the types of communication available and its proven value, why are we still seeing loggers out there, including fallers, working with no contact with the rest of the crew throughout the day?

Even if you have someone checking on you, you might lay there quite awhile injured before they come around again. We always preach the need for a quick response in an emergency situation. If no one knows you are injured, this isn't going to happen. Your company should have a policy of checking on workers regularly and some way for them to communicate. If this predetermined “*check in*” is missed and you can't get a hold of them, someone should be sent right away to see what is going on. Do not rely on someone being able to call in. If they are hurt, they might not be able to.

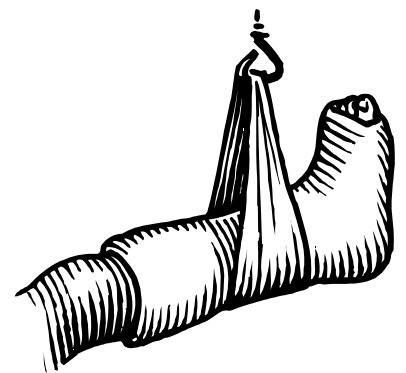
Something to consider using are the little two-way radios that are available. They have been improved quite a bit and their range is actually surprising. Most have a feature that allows you to push a button to signal in case you are unable to talk. One of the complaints I hear about these radios is that they are never charged or the batteries need replaced. This is not a good excuse. Whatever you use you should make it a habit to keep it in working order. One faller told me he preferred the ones that had rechargeable batteries but also run off of standard AA's. That way all he had to do is pack a couple of spare batteries in case his radio was dead. He told me that anything he could do to help ensure that he got home safely every night was worth the trouble.

Whatever you use, test it to be sure it works and make it part of your daily work routine. With all of the options, there is no reason not to try and find something that works. It could make all of the difference in how an accident turns out.

## ***SPEAKING OF A LOGGING ACCIDENT***

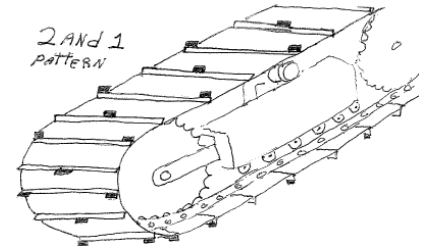
A very experienced timber faller was struck by debris, breaking his leg. The logger had fell a tree out into a clearing where it struck a small snag laying on the ground. A piece of the snag flew back to the stump hitting him in the leg breaking both of the lower leg bones. He has gone through surgery and is recovering, but will be laid up for the rest of this logging season and possibly longer.

Not picking on this faller specifically, but throughout the years this is the *accident* we continue to have. Looking back at the fallers that were hit by something, the majority of the them were standing within a couple of feet of the stump. No matter the size of the tree or the object it is going to hit, get away from the stump and watch the tree until it is on the ground! (please)



## **ICE BITS, CHAINS, FOG, MUD and ICE**

By Terry Streeter



We are in November headed to December which means rain, then mud, then a little snow, back to mud, rain and snow....it is just that beautiful time of the year! Hopefully you already have your proper clothes, boots, tires and chains all set out and ready to go.

What I really want to talk about is Ice Bits. It might not be really frozen yet, but even wet packed snow will send a track machine sliding sideways. Over all the years that I have been working in the woods I have seen a lot of different ideas on how Ice Bits are put on. Down the middle with the rails, zig zag, criss cross and even a diamond pattern. In my opinion, the best and also easiest to figure out is a **2 and 1** pattern. You put 2 on a grouser and then 1 on the next. I also use chunks 2 inches (2 1/2" at the most) long. Anything longer always seemed to work like skis and just didn't dig in like they were intended.

Keep an eye on them and replace them when they wear down. In the spring when you only have a week left and you think you might just chance it, DON'T! At least weld something on every other grouser so you can get off the hill. It takes time, but not nearly the time it takes to get that machine back up on the road!

Since we are on winter logging, talk to the crew about your Emergency Rescue Plan. If your logging job is fogged in or it is snowing hard, the helicopter will probably not be able to land. If your work road has deep ruts or is solid ice the ambulance will not be able to make it either. You may have to make some choices such as hauling the paramedics into your job or hauling the accident victim out. Make sure the crew knows where the spine board is at and which crummy would probably be the best one to use if you did have to transport someone.

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## **SLIPS AND FALLS, IT IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR!**

By Monte Biggers

I came around a corner the other day and spied a truck driver doing a strange sort of dance in the middle of the road. He was spinning around in circles on one leg while holding onto the other leg with both hands. I pulled up to him wondering whether or not I should get out. As I cautiously opened my door I could hear strange cries coming from the truck driver and noticed the front of him was all covered in mud. I figured that he fell off his truck and hurt his leg on the way down. When I got close enough and I thought he could hear me over all the racket he was making I asked, "Did you fall and hurt your leg?" I can't really write exactly what he replied, lets just say he loudly pointed out my keen powers of observation and the level of intelligence a safety guy must possess!

After he calmed down a bit we looked his leg over and decided he wasn't too seriously hurt. While we were talking he said something I thought I might pass on. "You know, we chain up these old trucks and skidders and they weld grousers on the track machines, but for us drivers probably the best thing we can do this time of the year is slow down and stay as close to the ground as possible".

It is never a good idea to climb up on your trailer while its decked anyway, but when it is wet, muddy or frozen it is a worse idea. Wait until that trailer is on the ground to put in those extensions.

This time of year everyone should be a little more cautious getting in and out of the machines, jumping on a log or just climbing up to fuel at night. SLIPS and FALLS cost time and money, plus it hurts!

## A LITTLE EFFORT MAY SAVE A BUNCH OF TROUBLE

Most of the logging companies around the state are doing a darn good job of getting those “*Caution, Logging Ahead*” signs up at their logging sites. It is obviously important to warn the public of logging activity to avoid any unnecessary accidents or any pesky liability issues.

But, as you loggers know better than anyone, the signs warn the public, but they do not keep them off your logging jobs. The hunters, berry pickers and yes, even the occasional logging safety guy, know logging is in the area but they just keep wandering aimlessly into the job site.

If any of your logging operation has even a *chance* of objects hitting the road, block it as this company did in the picture. Even if it is just one tree being fell, put someone, or something, down on the road to stop traffic.



*It doesn't take much, something like this little top, to keep even a daydreaming logging safety guy from driving under falling timber, skylines and other logging activity!*



## DIFFERENT HEARING PROTECTION AVAILABLE

By Monte Biggers

In our first aid classes Dan M. always talks about the different types of hearing protection that is available. One thing he has mentioned is *custom molded* ear plugs. In the past you had to go to an audiologist to have them made for you and they were rather expensive.

They now offer kits that allow you to make these type of plugs yourself for a lot less. I have found these kits at my favorite safety supply store (Cabelas) and at my wife's favorite store (WalMart). You can also search the internet and find other retail locations and ear plug molding kits for sale online.

It is always a good idea to have your hearing checked and monitored but if you are just after some custom molded earplugs, this might be a money saving option.

**TERRY STREETER 446-4149**

**GALEN HAMILTON 935-0401**



**LOG SAFE**

**MONTE BIGGERS 369-6631**

**CLIFF OSBORNE 1-800-ADIOS!**

Idaho Logging Safety News  
363 Shenandoah Dr.  
Kamiah, Idaho  
83536

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