



Crosscutter killed by rolling log

INCIDENT

A 32-year-old crosscutter was killed when a tree rolled from the slope above into the area where he was working.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The crosscutter was busy trimming a tree on a steep slope when a tree from further up the slope rolled down and crushed him. As the crosscutter was working on his own there were no witnesses. The investigating inspector reasoned that the tree may have been cut-up and left standing, before falling and gaining momentum when it rolled over the trimmed logs.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation determined that the crosscutter was working downhill from a tree that was either precariously perched, unstable or was cut-up and still standing.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

Working on steep hillsides brings the added chance of log or tree movement. When branches are removed, slovens cut off, the tree headed off, or, when debris from other trees falls onto a tree there is always the danger of movement.

If the tree was left cut-up and standing, the golden rule of not moving forward within two tree-lengths of the intended direction of fall overrides everything. On steep slopes this distance may need to be increased.

TO WHICH INDUSTRIES/SECTORS OR MATTERS WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT?

- Forestry
- Mobile plant

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.

