



## Multiple errors caused tree faller's death



### INCIDENT

A 20 year old tree faller died while trying to drive more than one cut-up tree at once. He made a number of serious mistakes.

### CIRCUMSTANCES

As shown in the drawing, the tree faller had scarfed tree numbers 2 to 6 cutting the scarf to half the diameter of the butt. He placed wing cuts on either side of the scarf.

The trees had already sat back before a holding wedge could be inserted. Judging from the 100-175mm of holding wood, he intended to drive the trees against their natural lean.

The driving-tree, number 1 in the diagram, set the trees falling. Number 3, a heavy-leaning tree, fell back striking the worker, who was about 15 metres from the butt.

### INVESTIGATION

The tree faller made at least five serious errors:

- Not clearing cut-up trees.
- Over-scarfing trees.
- Not using holding wedges.
- Driving more than one tree at a time.
- Not getting help when he was in difficulty.

### DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

Rules as stated in the: *Approved Code of Practice for Safety and Health in Forest Operations*

#### 6. TREE DRIVING

Rule

- 1 Tree driving is not acceptable as a normal felling practice. In the interests of safety it may be used to help fell difficult or dangerous trees.
- 2 The tree to be driven shall have a holding wedge inserted in the back-cut at the earliest opportunity and prior to any cut in the driving-tree.
- 3 The maximum number of trees in a drive without an observer is two, i.e. one on to one.
- 4 A competent person shall act as observer to warn on the movement of trees whenever an initial one-on-one drive is unsuccessful and a further tree is necessary.

*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.*

