



Skidder operator hit by falling tree

INCIDENT

A 30-year-old skidder operator suffered a fractured pelvis when he was struck by a tree felled by his workmate.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The tree feller was helping to strop a log onto the skidder. As it was near his finish time, he asked the skidder operator if he was returning for another drag. The operator replied "yes" and drove off towards the skids.

After assisting the skidder operator with the drag, the tree feller went back up the hill and starting cutting another tree, with his back facing the machine. While working behind the tree, he noticed the skidder and stopped about 30 metres away. The operator was at the rear of the skidder hooking up a log.

By now, the tree had begun to fall in the intended direction. The tree feller yelled out but it was too late. Luckily the operator was struck by a branch, not the stem.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation determined that the accident was caused by:

- A communication breakdown between two experienced loggers
- Felling a tree without ensuring no person is within two tree lengths
- Production pressures.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

Department of Labour Advice

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

4. USING MACHINERY

Rule

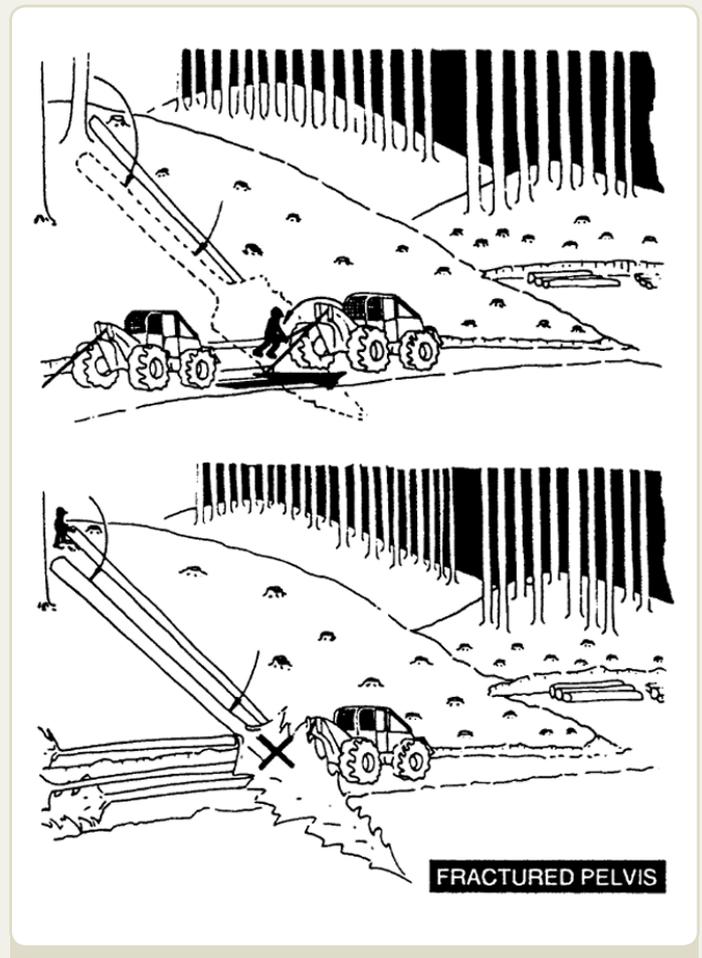
Machines shall keep away from tree felling by a distance equal to at least twice the height of the tallest tree being felled.

They shall enter the area only when felling has ceased and the fellers have signalled their approval.

3. SAFETY AREAS

Rule

1. Fellers shall ensure that no:
 - Other person;
 - Machine;
 - Operating ropes;
 - Other operations; are within two tree-lengths of the tree being felled.



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

- Forestry
- Mobile Plant

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