



## Tree faller chooses the wrong escape route



### INCIDENT

A 21-year-old tree faller suffered serious injuries when he was struck by a log sliding down a hill.

### CIRCUMSTANCES

The tree faller was cutting old crop radiata pine in a clear fell operation.

He felled a large tree in the direction of its lean, which was angled uphill across a ridge. As the tree fell, he moved down and across, below the falling tree, which broke across the ridge on impact. The butt log, which was 23m in length and 3m around the girth, swung sideways and slid 11m down the hill striking the faller and crushing him against other logs.

### INVESTIGATION

The investigation determined that the tree faller chose to use an escape route on the downhill side of the tree being felled.

### DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

1. Whenever possible, trees should be felled across a hillside rather than uphill
2. Clear a sufficient area around the tree and prepare an adequate escape route before starting the felling cuts
3. Never use an escape route on the downhill side of the tree being felled.

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