

# Safety Alert



## Harvester Head Entrapment

### Background

While attempting to undertake a servicing task on the topping saw, a harvesting contractor's machine operator was trapped in the feed rollers of a harvester head.

On initial investigation it appears the operator did not follow Safe Work Procedures to fully shutdown the computer and machine and de-energise prior to commencing the service task. As the machine operator pulled-out the saw on the head, a sensor activated and the feed rollers closed entrapping his legs resulting in crush fractures to his pelvis and upper leg.

A log haulage driver was able to provide initial assistance by releasing the hydraulic hose pressure and undertaking first aid.

The machine operator was experienced and had been inducted to the machine including specific training for the machine and harvesting head combination.

The machine and harvesting head were subsequently checked for mechanical or programming faults and passed for recommencement of routine operations.



Operator trapped between feed rollers

Position of harvesting head at time of incident



# Safety Alert



## Safety Issues Identified

- This issue affects all machine operators, harvesting contractors, and all other persons who work at or visit harvesting sites.
- The machine operator did not follow the contractor's Safe Work Procedures or manufacturer's safe operating procedures.
- Working on harvester heads involves a high level of risk. To control this risk operators must ensure that they completely shut down the machine, including turning the key to off and shutting down the computer, de-energizing the machine completely and releasing pressure from the hydraulic hoses before commencing any maintenance work on the harvester or head.
- Basic mechanical and first aid training assisted the first responder to correctly assess the situation and provide initial assistance.

## Actions Required

- All field servicing of machinery is to be undertaken in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and guidelines and in accordance with the Company's Safe Work Procedures.
- Safe Work Procedures for machine field servicing tasks should be reviewed ensuring guidelines on machine shutdown and de-energising are specific and clear.
- Machine operators are to conduct pre-start checks every day and follow the correct Safe Work Procedures for the task to be undertaken for the machinery in use.
- Additional and/or refresher training should be provided to machine operators on correct machine shut down and de-energise machines ahead of commencement of servicing tasks.
- Technical and mechanical checks of harvesting and processing heads should be undertaken by an appropriately qualified person to ensure machines are operating to manufacturers specifications and all safety and fail safe systems are operational.

## Recommendations

- Harvest contractors should review their Health & Safety Management System to incorporate learnings from this incident.
- Behavioural Safety Observations should be conducted to ensure that Safe Work Procedures are followed.
- Consider introduction of a "buddy" call-up system for high-risk service activities.

## Further Information

- Manufacturers guidelines for harvesting head servicing
- Forest Harvesting Code of Practice
- [Guide to managing risks of plant and equipment for forestry operations](#)

