

HAZARD ALERT

Industry: Logging

Age: 28 years

Experience: 4 years

Area: B.C. Interior

Hooktender injured while felling trees on steep, snow-covered slope

During a high-lead logging operation, the hooktender went below the landing area to fell trees that were obstructing the cable yarding lines. He was working on the block boundary sideline on a steep, snow-covered slope. A danger tree was limb-tied with a large cedar tree that the hooktender was falling from the boundary sideline. When the cedar fell, the danger tree was also pulled forward until it broke loose and snapped back toward the hooktender. The top of the danger tree broke off, striking the hooktender and causing severe injuries.

The accident occurred in March in an Interior snowbelt area. As there was no faller on-site, the hooktender was felling trees on the boundary sideline near the yarding operation so that yarding operations could continue without delay.

Safe work practices:

- Plan high-lead logging operations so that areas of high snowfall are not logged in winter when excessive amounts of snow may cover and hide logs, making it difficult for ground crews to recover them. Ground crews may feel pressure to continue production by “hot-logging” (that is, felling the trees in hazardous proximity to the yarding operation) to attempt to stay ahead of heavy snowfalls.
- Ensure that only workers with the necessary experience and qualifications are permitted to fall trees.
- Place falling cuts in both trees that are limb-tied together, to control the direction of their fall. Trees limb-tied together should be felled together.

