

FALLING DOWN ON THE JOB

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In recent years, logging has become safer. Equipment design has played a large part in making the woods a safer place to work. Training and education programs are now common to the industry. Even though logging has become safer there is still great risk that remains.

One area of risk in our forest industry is the losses caused by trips, slips and falls. In a high-risk industry such as forestry, this type of loss seems “silly”. But the results of these losses are no joke as the potential for serious injury or death exists. Ground personnel and equipment operators alike are exposed to the same risk of slips, trips and falls.

BACKGROUND On a wet and cool winter day, a mechanized crew was shutting down for lunch. The last truck was loaded, and pulled away from the deck area. The loader operator started to exit the loader to eat lunch. While getting down he slipped on the loader’s frame-rail. The frame-rail of the loader was slick from oil and the recent rainfall.

UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION The operator failed to recognize the risk the slick metal surface presented. He failed to use a three-point of contact dismount and slipped and fell off the loader. He landed on top of a 10-inch Poplar log and fractured humerus bone in the upper arm.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS INCIDENT

1. Always use the 3-point of contact technique for mounting and dismounting.
2. Keep platforms, steps and handles free from grease, oil and other foreign material.
3. Maintain a firm grip while entering or exiting a machine.
4. Proper footwear with good ankle support is mandatory. (No tennis shoes)
5. Keep your mind on the business at hand. Be focused.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GROUND PERSONEL

1. Proper footwear with good ankle support is mandatory. (No tennis shoes)
2. Avoid climbing or walking on felled trees or limbs.
3. Scan from the sky to the ground for hazards. Identify possible risk and deal with it.
4. Avoid stump holes, loose or slick bark on trees and limbs, rocks, vines, uneven or steep terrain, wet areas.
5. Stay on the “uphill” side of all felled trees and limbs.
6. When not cutting, the chain brake on the saw must be engaged. More than two steps with a running saw require the chain brake to be on.
7. Maintain proper distance from all mobile equipment.
8. Wear high visibility clothing. Be seen!
9. Constantly scan the area for risk and danger.

This is a good example of how easy a slip; trip or fall injury could occur. The employee experienced terrible pain and suffering. He is out of work for an extended period of time and the employer has a “lost man” for at least three months. Production and insurance rates will be impacted. Even though logging has become safer over the years, it still remains a risky business. We must all remain focused. Eliminate the risk, and we reduce the chance for an incident.