

Slips, trips and Falls

By JJ Lemire

Logging is considered the most hazardous job in the United States. Recently, several articles from industry magazines have been about truck driving becoming one of the most dangerous jobs. Whether you are logging or driving a tractor and trailer, you face danger walking around the job site. Even before you lift your foot to climb in the equipment or truck cab, you have been exposed to several hazards. Loose debris, slippery bark, mud, rain, etc. are just some ground hazards around you.

Slips, trips, and falls are the most common injuries to equipment operators and truck drivers, equally. Supervisors and managers want to keep their employees safe and reduce lost-time accidents and injuries. As such, most in woods injuries can be prevented by following some well-established, common-sense rules.

Foot Wear

- They should have non-slip materials, proper treads and not be smoothed soles.
- Footwear should be comfortable as employees are on their feet daily, climbing in/out of equipment and trucks.
- They should provide protection (such as steel-toed, ANSI-certified safety shoes to protect their feet).
- No cowboy boots, rubber overshoes or flip-flops.

Equipment

- Properly maintain and repair items identified in the pre/post trip inspection.
- Equipment discrepancies should be repaired before operations begin.
- Items such as damaged steps and handholds must be repaired as they are needed for three points of contact.
- Do not enter or exit cabs with items in your hands. Lay it down on the floor, exit or enter then pick it up. Put your small items in your pockets (phone, notebook, etc.)
- Avoid the bad habit to jump out of equipment or off trailers! Use the steps and handholds.
- Always use three points of contact (two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet).

Weather Issues

- Wear high visibility vests or shirts to be seen.
- Operators/Drivers need to be aware that wet conditions (rain, snow, ice, and mist) can be slippery for them as well as for their equipment or trucks.
- Mud, grease and oils also add to the loss of traction for your feet as they contact the smooth surfaces you are about to climb on.
- Traction – use caution walking on ice so your feet stay on the ground, not your rear end.

A little extra thought before you walk, or climb can help prevent slips, trips and falls. They are an ever-present danger to your employee. Educate and train employees in the safe way to enter/exit equipment and trucks. Use a team effort so employees and employer help keep each other safe.