

## Contractor not sighted in machine work area

A logging contractor was fatally injured when crushed between two machines on a skid site.

### What happened

The contractor arrived at the skid site and signalled the skidder driver to come across the skid so that he could talk to him. The operator drove the skidder across the skid and the contractor moved out to meet it.

Unfortunately, the skidder was now parked in the work area of a Bell logger. The Bell had been pulling logs through the static delimeter and then dragging the logs in backwards mode across the skid and placing them in stockpile.

The Bell operator was not aware the skidder or contractor was in his work area, continued his working pattern and the contractor was crushed between the two machines.

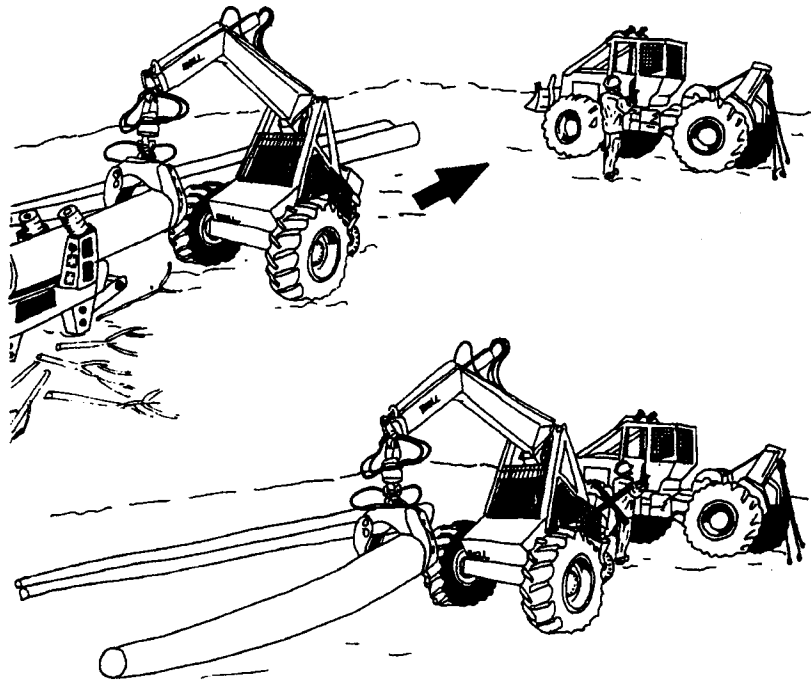
### Accident cause

Failure to notify the Bell operator of the intention to enter the work area.

### Prevention

Remember that operators' jobs require constant attention and that their visibility, especially on Bell loggers, is limited.

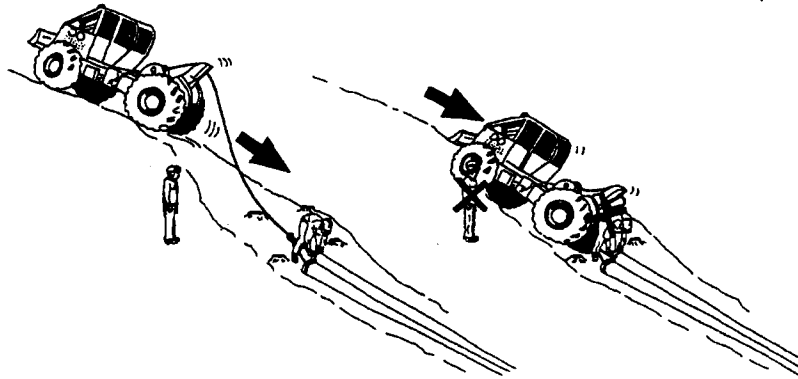
Section 2.1.6 "Safety Code for Forest Operations - Part 3 - Logging" details the steps to be taken when entering an operational area.



2.1.6 All persons approaching an operational area shall:

- (a) Notify the employer or person in charge, before entering the work area;
- (b) Where machinery is operating, approach the area, where practicable, from above or level with the operation;
- (c) Draw attention to their presence and intention by calling out loudly or by some other means; and
- (d) Not enter the operational area until acknowledged or signalled to do so.

# Skidder brake failure causes fatality



A skidder operator was run over by a skidder running backwards downhill after its brakes failed.

## What happened

A skidder operator with only seven days experience was left in charge of his machine extracting logs in broken country. He was accompanied by a tree feller.

The machine was parked at the top of a steep incline and the operator moved below to strop up logs ready for breaking out.

The braking system failed to hold the machine on the slope and it rolled backwards, striking the operator and causing injuries that were to prove fatal. The machine also struck the tree feller causing minor injuries before coming to rest against a tree 15 metres from where it started.

## General

The contracting firm was charged and fined under the Bush Workers Act 1945 as follows:

1. Permitting a log skidder to be used in a manner likely to cause danger to life (\$3,500).
2. Allowing a skidder to be used without it being under the supervision of the employer or his authorised responsible representative, (\$1,000 with Court costs and Crown Prosecutor fees).

## Accident cause

Skidder brake failure.

## Prevention

"Safety Code for Forest Operations - Part 3 - Logging" contains these sections relevant to this accident (26.2, 27.1, 27.2, 27.6 and 27.9).

## In summary

1. The brakes must hold the machine on any slope on which it is to be operated.
2. Only trained operators or those under adequate supervision shall operate skidders.
3. Skidders shall not be used on slopes greater than recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Winch ropes shall be of sufficient length to safely reach all parts of the working area. Add a temporary extension if necessary.
5. Particular care is required when breaking out on steep slopes—brakes may fail.

While some skidder makes are fitted with alternative braking methods, those with in-line fluid lock systems require first-class maintenance to safely hold the machine on operating slopes.

6. Daily inspection and maintenance shall be carried out to ensure the machine is in sound and safe condition to operate.