

## Bush serious accidents - August 1993

### Logging — serious accidents 12

Activity	Cause	Activity	Cause
Felling	4	Falling object	3
Trimming	3	Moving object	2
Breaking out	2	Contact object carried	4
Hauling	1	Slip/slide	1
Skidwork	1	Kickback	2
Stacking/sorting	1		
	<u>12</u>		<u>12</u>
External agency	Type of injury	External agency	Type of injury
Chainsaw	3	Fracture	6
Log	3	Laceration	3
Tree	4	Crushing	1
Rigging	1	Multiple	2
Uprooted stump	1		
	<u>12</u>		<u>12</u>
	Body part		Body part
Head	1	Leg	2
Arm	2	Foot	2
Trunk	2	Multiple	3
			<u>12</u>

It is pleasing to note an overall reduction in accidents reported during July.

Over the past two months we have looked at two parts of logging, suggesting ways and methods of reducing the number and severity of trimming and felling accidents. This month we are going to look at pruning, the part of silviculture where most accidents have occurred.

Although our figures do not, so far, show a higher number of accidents outside of logging, ACC figures for the three years ending 1992, show that logging made up only 42% of all registered claims from the forest industry.

Logging 813 claims (42%) average cost \$2,400.

Forestry 1146 claims (58%) average cost \$2,600.

### Forestry and tree work—serious accidents 2

Activity	Cause	Activity	Cause
Planting	1	Moving object	1
Pruning	1	Trip/stumble	1
	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
External agency	Type of injury	External agency	Type of injury
Terrain	1	Dislocation	1
Rock	1	Crushing	1
	<u>2</u>		<u>2</u>
	Body part		Body part
Trunk	1	Leg	1
			<u>2</u>

Next month we will be looking at reported accidents during the first six months of the enactment of the Health and Safety in Employment Act—the law affecting people at work.

The above accidents were reported to Health and Safety Inspectors (Bush) during August 1993.

### ■ Falls caused by trips and slips

During the last few months most pruning accidents have been caused by falls or slips due to uneven ground. In clear wood regimes first pruning often takes place when low vegetation of gorse, bracken, blackberry or other plants hinder easy movement and tend to hide holes and uneven ground. In winter months these areas seldom dry out, increasing the likelihood of slipping. Subsequent pruning lifts often require climbing over thin to waste material with dangers of slipping and tripping.

Here are a few ways of helping to reduce trips and slips:

- Wear footwear that gives good support to the ankles. Lace-up types should be firmly and securely laced up at all times.

- Do not wear worn or slippery-soled footwear.
- Clothing should fit fairly closely about you. Do not wear overlong or baggy trousers. Damaged or torn clothing should be repaired properly or discarded.
- Take care when walking on felled trees and branches. Place your foot at the junction of the trunk and branch to secure your step.
- Plan ahead as you change walking positions. Identify possible hazards and select a safe route.
- Slow down in tricky conditions to reduce the hazard.

Injuries resulting from falls included sprained ankles, a bruised trunk, a stick through the wrist and a twisted knee.

#### ■ Eye injuries

The most common cause was from sawdust in the eye resulting in severe inflammation. In another case, a pruner had his eye punctured while pushing his way through thick gorse.

Try and reduce eye injuries by:

- Wearing a visor on your helmet or industrial goggles in hazardous situations. Modern goggles are user friendly although some people do not like wearing them.
- Taking special care when pushing through head-high vegetation. Tilt the head slightly back to give more reaction time and room.
- Shifting work positions so that sawdust is not blown into your face by wind or chainsaw use.

#### ■ Injuries associated with ladders

The most common causes of ladder accidents are slipping while changing work position on the ladder, slipping off a rung while climbing up or down, the ladder becoming insecure due to poor placement, mechanical failure and injuries due to contact with tools being carried while climbing up or down.

Cut down the possibility of accidents while using ladders by following the guidelines below.

- Ensure the ladder has sound footing and the bottom is about a quarter of its height from the tree.
- Whenever practicable, erect the ladder against the trunk—not on branches.
- On sloping ground, work from the uphill side of the tree to avoid overreaching and maintain a secure footing.

- Try to use both hands while climbing up or down. If using a jacksaw, place it in your pouch while climbing.
- Do not overreach while working from a ladder. An overreach of about 300 mm is dangerous.
- Regularly check your ladder for defects. Pay particular attention to the junction of the stiles and the rung. Using your ladder as a bridge to walk on will decrease its lifespan and cause early structural failures.
- Do not carry tools on rungs while shifting workplaces.

Ladder-associated injuries include sprains to the joints, broken arms and severe bruising.

#### ■ Contact with tools being carried

Most of these accidents result in lacerations due to contact with cutting edges or saw chain when these tools hit other objects and swing towards the pruner.

##### a) Chainsaw

- When using a chainsaw for pruning, make sure it is properly tuned to avoid chain movement when idling.
- Activate the chainbrake when carrying the saw over short, unobstructed distances.
- In other circumstances, switch off the saw when changing work positions.
- Start the saw on the opposite side of the tree.

##### b) Other tools

- Place your jacksaw in the pouch when not in use.
- Keep a firm grip on pruning shears while shifting work positions to avoid the cutting jaws opening and inflicting injuries.
- Check tools regularly to ensure they are in correct working order.

#### ■ Falling branches hitting pruner

Obviously, this is quite a common occurrence and sometimes results in lacerations, grazing and bruising.

- Position yourself so that you are able to move freely to avoid being hit by falling branches.
- Watch for falling large branches—shift work position if necessary to avoid being in their fall path.
- Be careful with a lodged or caught branch, it may be under tension and spring back when cut.