

# FORESTRY BULLETIN

## Cut-Up Dead Spar Falls on Logger

A faller had cut up a dead spar (keg, snag) which did not fall. He carried on with other work and was fatally injured when the spar fell on him.

### What happened

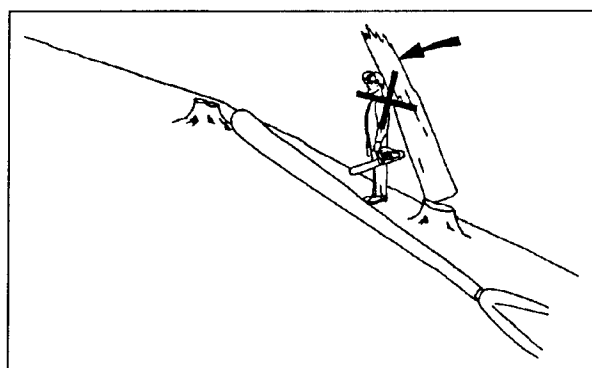
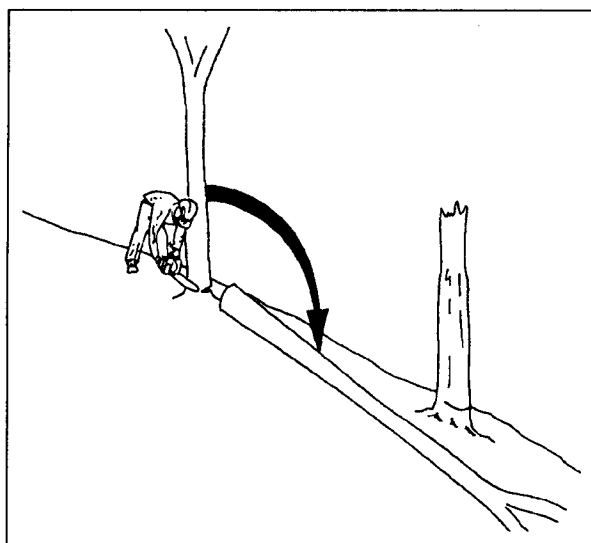
The operation involved the recovery of beech saw and pulp logs from steep and difficult terrain.

The faller had placed a single sloping cut (30°) right through a dead spar but it did not fall. The spar had decayed wood for about 5 cm on the outside but the inner wood was sound. No attempt had been made to use wedges to get the spar to the ground before work commenced on another tree. However, the faller tried to drive the dead spar with a small beech tree. The drive was unsuccessful and the worker limbed and headed off the beech, working about 5 m below the standing spar. He then headed uphill towards the spar. He either gave the spar a push or it may have slipped off the stump on its own accord. It fell on him causing fatal injuries.

### Accident cause

- Hingewood was completely severed from one side of the tree with subsequent lack of control of the felling process.
- There was no constant tension kept on the pulling rope to control the direction of fall.
- The worker was said to have had twelve years' experience. However, examination of the felling site showed many instances of substandard scarfing and back cutting techniques well below accepted standards as outlined in the *Safety Code for Forestry Operations—Part 3: Logging*.

The cause of the accident was incorrect felling methods. The spar should have been scarfed and back cut using the methods outlined in the *Safety*



*Code for Forestry Operations—Part 3: Logging*. If there was any doubt as to the lean of the tree, wedges should have been used and driven into the back cut as soon as practicable.

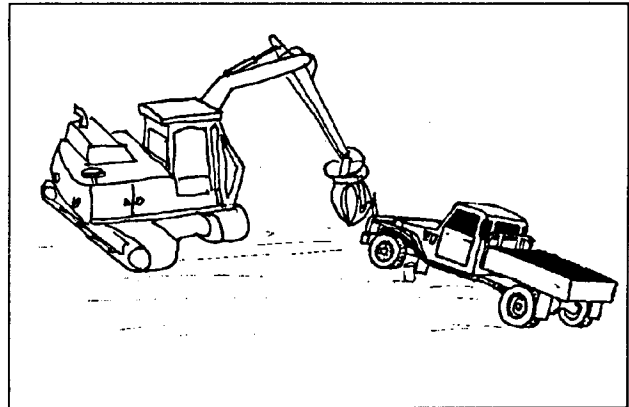
### Prevention

The answer is simple—any felling should be carried out using the correct procedures which have been adopted by the forest industry and outlined in the *Safety Code for Forestry Operations—Part 3: Logging*.

# Odds and Ends

## Short cut leads to injury

A ute received a puncture near the driver's skid site so he continued on and drove on to the skid. The skid area where the ute was parked was wet and muddy so it was decided to use the knuckle-boom loader to lift the ute onto a wooden block to change the wheel. Difficulty was experienced in attaching the loader's winch rope so a piece of 12 mm polypropylene rope was used. The ute was raised onto the block and the wheel was changed. When lifting the ute clear of the block to return it to the ground, the rope broke and the helper's hand was trapped. He suffered a haematoma (blood clot), fractured ring, middle and index fingers and a chipped thumb.



**Use correct equipment.**

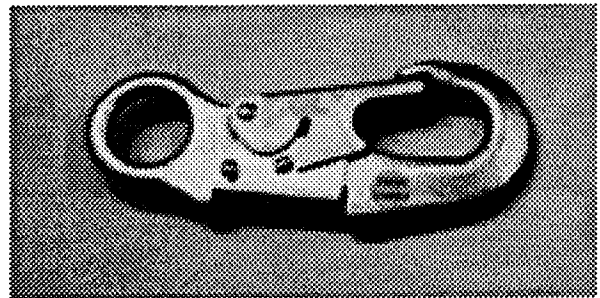
**Do not take short cuts.**

## Faulty pin in climbing hook dangerous

A fault was discovered in an imported climbing hook manufactured in the USA. The pin was not properly crimped and fell out causing a hazardous situation that, luckily, did not result in serious injury. There were no markings on the hook which the distributor has since replaced with a newer model. The hook was sold as model K352 and has been replaced by model 3155. The newer model requires a double action to open the latch, is proof load tested to 7.5 kN and marked with labels.

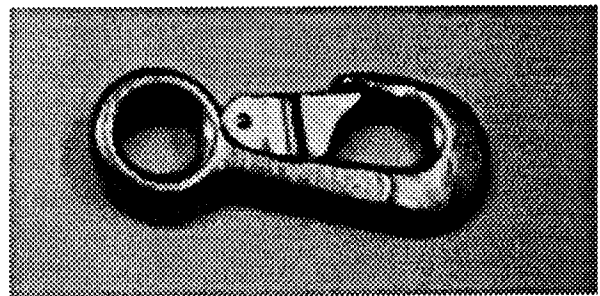
**Do not use model K352.**

**Do not purchase any ancillary climbing equipment that is not proof tested and marked with this information or the safe working load.**



Above: New model 3155.

Below: Faulty model K352—do not use.



## Two breaches of the Health and Safety in Employment Act “two tree length rule”

Two workers, thinning to waste, were charged and fined for working in contravention of the “two tree length rule”. One worker was felling a tree which fell 90° from the intended direction of fall and struck his fellow worker. He was aware of the “two tree length rule” and admitted contravening it. The worker who was struck by the tree was charged with failure to ensure his own safety. He also admitted that he was

aware of the “two tree length rule” and was contravening it. Both were fined and had to pay Court costs. The rule is:

“People not assisting with the felling operation, unless supervising, under training, training others or authorised by the person in charge, shall remain at a safe distance at least twice the length of the tallest tree being felled ... Fellers and feller observers shall ensure that this safety area is maintained”.