

Hauler Operator Caught by Clothing in Revolving Shaft

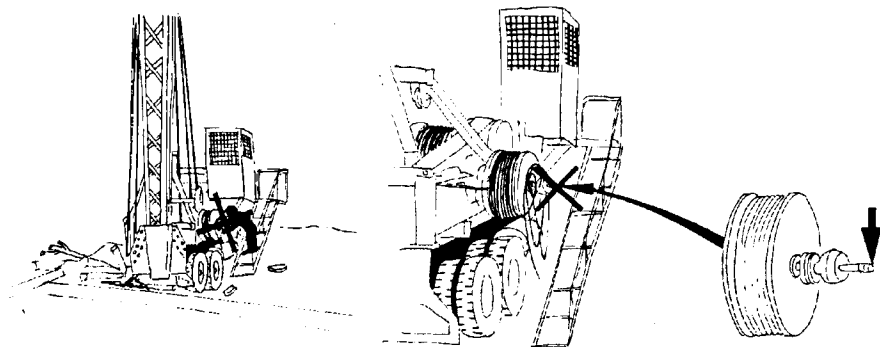
A hauler operator was killed when his jersey was caught by the revolving strawline drum drive shaft while he was attempting to put some loose rope on the drum.

What happened

The hauler was working on a steep hillside. When a log was landed, the weight of the tail rope pulling back on the butt rigging meant that the rigging was unable to go slack enough to release the log from the strop. To get slack, the strawline was attached to the butt rigging and the rigging and tailrope pulled ahead 1-2 metres to get enough slack. The strawline was normally attached by the driver of a skidder which pulled the released logs to a processing and load-out skid 400 metres away and the hauler operator would work the hauler. If the skidder driver was absent, the hauler operator would carry out the task.

The hauler operator had gone to attach the strawline onto the butt rigging but the strawline had got over the side of the drum. This could have occurred with the release of the brake and vibration causing the drum to revolve slowly backwards and loosen the wraps or by the rope being pulled quickly from the drum which would overwind and let the wraps loosen and fall over the side.

Without turning the hauler motor off, the operator climbed onto the frame of the hauler to put the strawline back on the drum. He either leaned over to put the rope on or may have slipped and fallen forward. His jersey came in contact with the revolving shaft winding the jersey up to his neck and pulling him into the shaft.



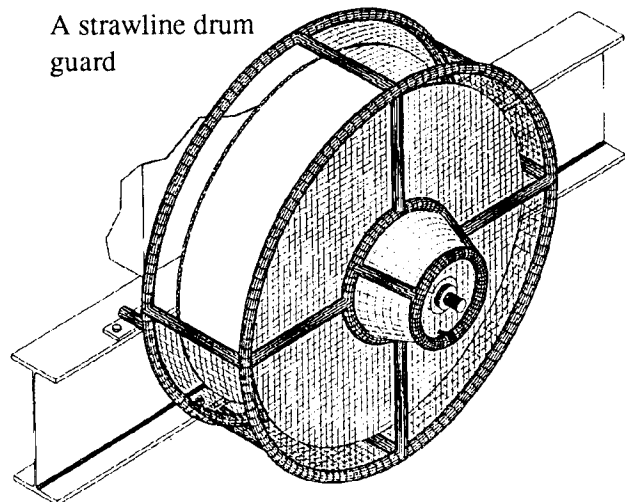
Accident cause

Working alone and attempting to put rope back on drum with the hauler motor still running and the shaft still revolving.

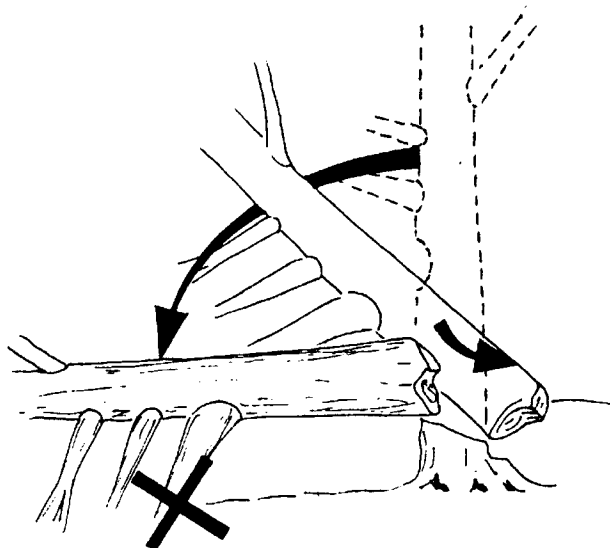
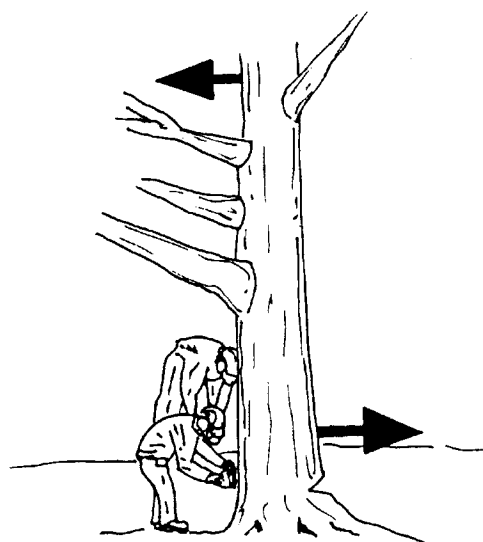
Prevention

1. If working alone, turn the hauler motor off before attempting to put rope back on any drum; or,
2. Carry out such work with an operator at the hauler controls.

A strawline drum guard



Poor Felling Techniques Result in the Death of a Self-Employed Firewood Cutter



Poor felling techniques resulted in the loss of control of the tree being felled and the faller being struck and killed as he tried to escape.

What happened

The self-employed firewood cutter was felling trees for a domain board, recovering what logs there were and taking firewood.

A number of trees had been felled and work was concentrated on felling a large branched tree. The heavy branches were opposite the predominant lean of the tree. The faller placed a very small scarf followed by a backcut coming down on a steep angle towards the scarf area. The tree would not fall and so a helper brought wedges and hit them into the backcut. The deceased kept sawing and the helper kept hitting in the wedges. As a result of this, the tree was cut off the stump and slipped forward onto the ground. The tree fell backwards over the stump and hit the faller. The helper, who had been on the opposite side to the faller, was caught by small branches but suffered no harm.

Accident cause

An examination of previously-felled trees revealed that the firewood cutter was totally lacking in tree felling experience and skills. The inspector investigating the fatality said that in 35 years of experience, he had never seen such poor felling

practice. There were many instances of overcut scarfs, back sloping backcuts and trees cut completely off at the stump.

The tree that caused the fatality had insufficient scarf and was cut completely off the stump causing it to slide off the stump and then, due to change in balance, fall in the opposite direction to the intended direction of fall, hitting the faller as he tried to escape.

Prevention

- Obviously the felling of any type of tree should be carried out by competent persons. It is the operation in forestry work that causes the greatest number of fatalities.
- The trees being felled in this operation were difficult and dangerous with heavy branches, a wide range of diameters and varying balance and lean.
- Such trees should only be felled by a person with competence and experience in this type of work or, if a worker is inexperienced, under direct one-to-one supervision by a competent and experienced person.
- When working in dangerous situations such as this, consideration should be given to the use of machinery to assist and make the operation safer.