

Loads suspended by hydraulics can be lethal

A logging contractor was fatally injured when crushed between falling loader arms and the machine.

What happened

The hydraulics of the beak of the loader had not been operating correctly and the local engineering firm thought the "O" rings could be the problem.

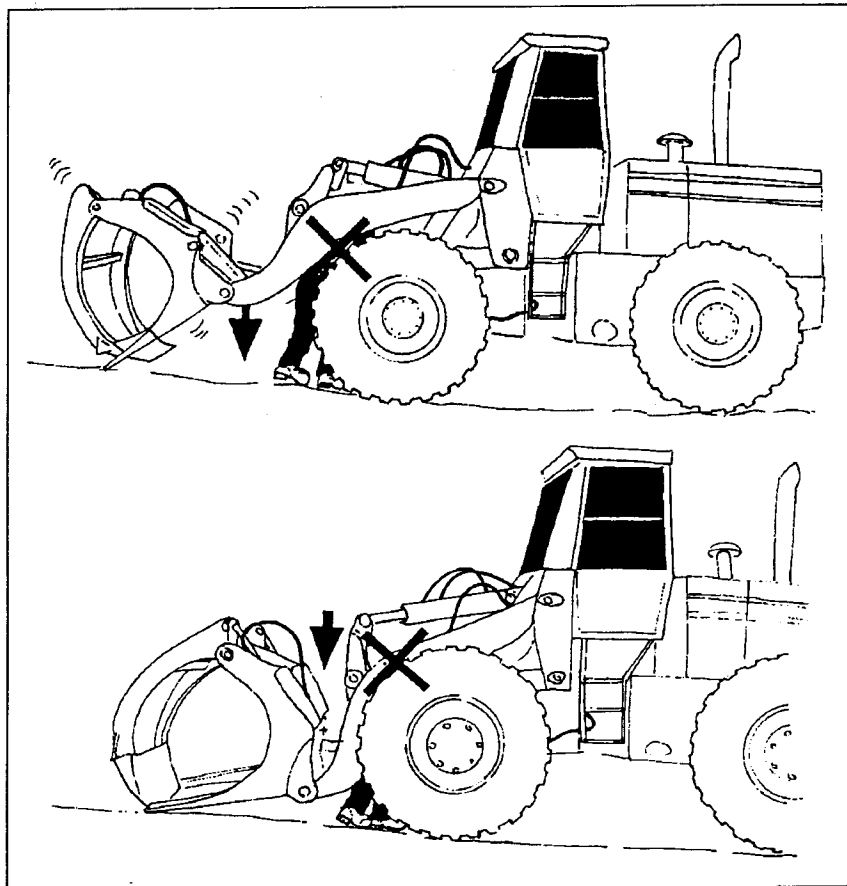
The inspection panel to the control bank on this model is located at the front of the machine. In order to work on the control bank, the tip of the forks of the loader were dug into the ground to provide more working room.

The following appears to be the sequence of events that then took place:

Hydraulic hoses to the beak and forks were undone and everything was apparently stable. However, it appears that the contractor then began to loosen the nuts of the hose of the main lifting ram. As soon as the pressure was released, the arms and heels of the forks fell to the ground crushing the contractor between a fork's cross member and the machine.

Accident cause

Failure to provide supports or other devices to ensure that the forks of the loader could not drop or be lowered while the contractor was working under them.



Prevention

- While working under raised objects, provide supports or other devices to ensure that the object cannot fall or be lowered.

There have been a number of accidents involving the accidental releasing of hydraulic pressures or failure of hydraulic systems while people have been working under such things as raised forks, buckets and other hydraulic attachments. Do not work under or even go under anything raised by hydraulic pressure unless provision is in place to ensure that it cannot be lowered or fall into the work or access area.

Branch breaks and arborist falls

An arborist suffered a broken pelvis when he fell from a tree he was working on.

What happened

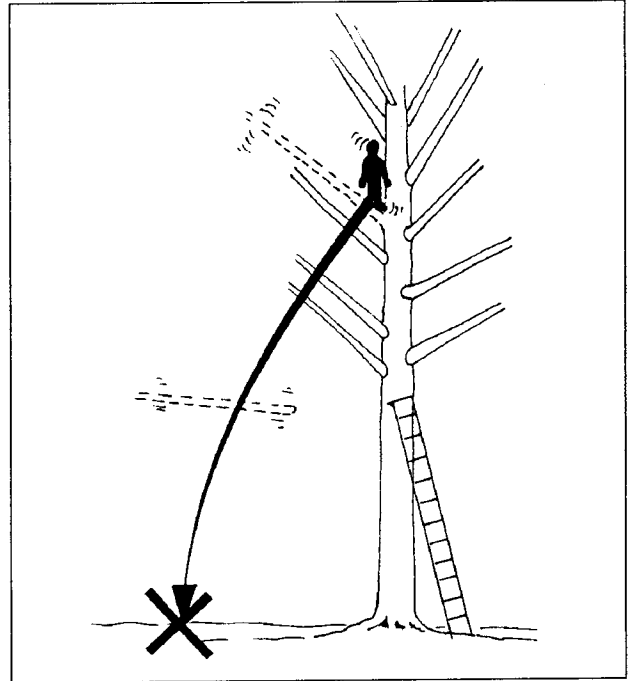
The arborist was pruning poplar trees in a park-like setting. He had used a 4.2 metre ladder to gain access to the lower branches and had then free climbed to a height of 7.5 metres. He had positioned himself on a 3 centimetre branch which was unable to carry his weight. The branch broke and he fell to the ground suffering a broken pelvis.

Accident cause

1. No safety harness was worn which meant that the arborist was not anchored to the tree.
2. Failure to recognise the inability of the branch to take his weight.

Prevention

The Approved Code of Practice for Safety and Health in Tree Work: Part 1 Arboriculture, states that the climber shall wear a safety harness while climbing and be securely attached to a suitable anchor point at all times by means climbing rope, slings or safety line.



Another point outlined in the code is to alert the climbers to the brittleness of woods such as poplar.

If these points had been followed, the accident would not have happened.

Smaller trees can pack a clout too!

Those working in clear felling or production thinning operations tend to think that, because of the small tree size, there are few dangers from serious harm injuries in thinning to waste operations.

Those working at thinning to waste know that denser stockings and less room to fell trees into open spaces, often leads to a higher number of hang ups and trees felled into loaded positions. Coupled with undergrowth or scrub and the quantity of material usually on the ground, these hazards create the potential for serious harm accidents. Let's look at one.

What happened

In a thinning to waste operation in 9-year-old radiata, a worker was driving a tree to release a hang up.

The felled tree hit the hung up tree but, after spinning and tearing holding wood off the stump, slid down towards the feller.

The feller was struck by the sliding tree and suffered a broken leg which had to be pinned by surgery.

Accident cause	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probably a lack of sufficient holding wood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure sufficient holding wood is left to guide tree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to identify the hazard of the tree sliding down the hang up. In thin to waste, this is a likely hazard due to the lack of weight in the driving tree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay particular attention to the hazard of trees that may slide and come back into the work area. Move out of this area as detailed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to move to a safe position at an angle diagonally behind the stump at the completion of felling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move along the escape route diagonally to the rear once the felling cuts have been completed. If this is not possible, move as close as possible to the diagonal and to the side rear.