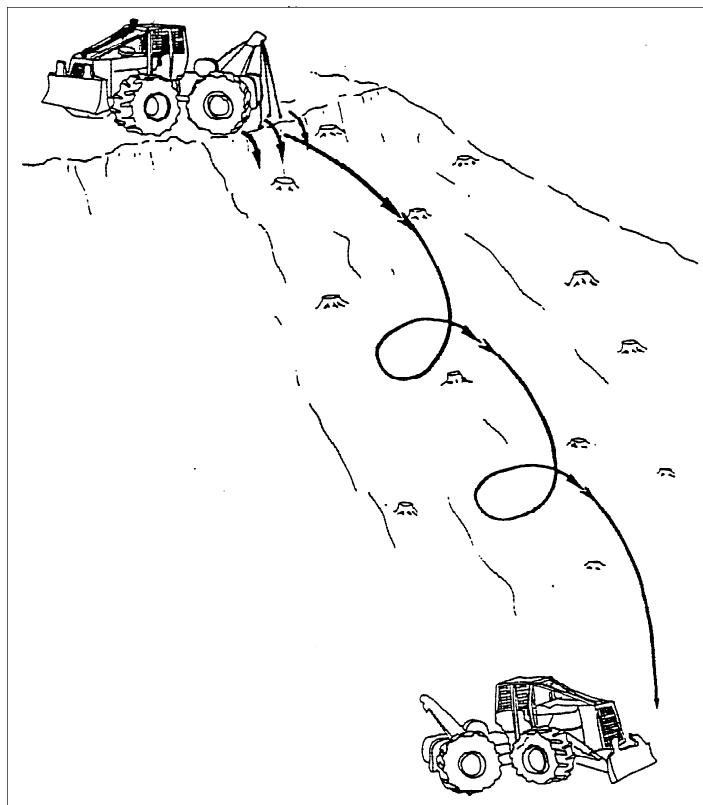




DEPARTMENT OF  
**LABOUR**  
TE TARI MAHI

# Forestry Bulletin

## Seat Belt Saves Skidder Operator's Life



An experienced 30-year-old skidder driver escaped with minor injuries when his Caterpillar 528 skidder rolled end over end down a steep slope. He is certain that wearing a seat belt saved his life.

### What Happened

The skidder was reversed to a steep incline and was being manoeuvred into a position for log extraction. While manoeuvring, the skidder became "bellied" on a large boulder. As the driver attempted to free the machine, the boulder dislodged, and both machine and boulder rolled down the hill.

### Accident Cause

Miscalculation by machine operator and failing to take necessary precautions, i.e. providing a safe area to park the machine.

Failure by the operator to correctly evaluate conditions and circumstances at the time.

### Prevention

This accident illustrates changing conditions in a logging operation and the need for ongoing hazard awareness. Always stay alert!

**Note:** Since 1 August 1992, the *Safety Code for Bush Undertakings* has required seat belts to be fitted to skidders, loaders, tractors, etc. It requires such safety restraints to be worn at all times while the machine is in motion. (s.26.3)

**Exemption:** In cases where operators do their own breaking out, the safety restraint equipment shall be worn once the completed drag is attached to the winch rope.

# Skidder Operator Injured in Rollover: Not Wearing a Seat Belt

A 28-year-old skidder operator was thrown from the seat and crushed when his skidder rolled. He was not wearing a seat belt.

## What Happened

He was towing logs up a slope when the logs speared into the bank, halting the skidder. In his attempt to free the logs, they jammed against a stump and the machine winched itself in reverse towards the logs and the edge of a bank.

It appears he panicked and failed to disengage the winch. The machine pulled itself over and he was tossed out of the seat. His leg was crushed under the canopy and it was two hours before he could be freed and taken to hospital.

He suffered severe fractures to his left leg and a laceration to the scalp.

## Accident Causes

This accident was caused through driver inexperience. He'd only been shown how to operate the skidder the day before and had not been instructed in the safety precautions in the *Safety Code for Forest Operations, Part 3: Logging*.

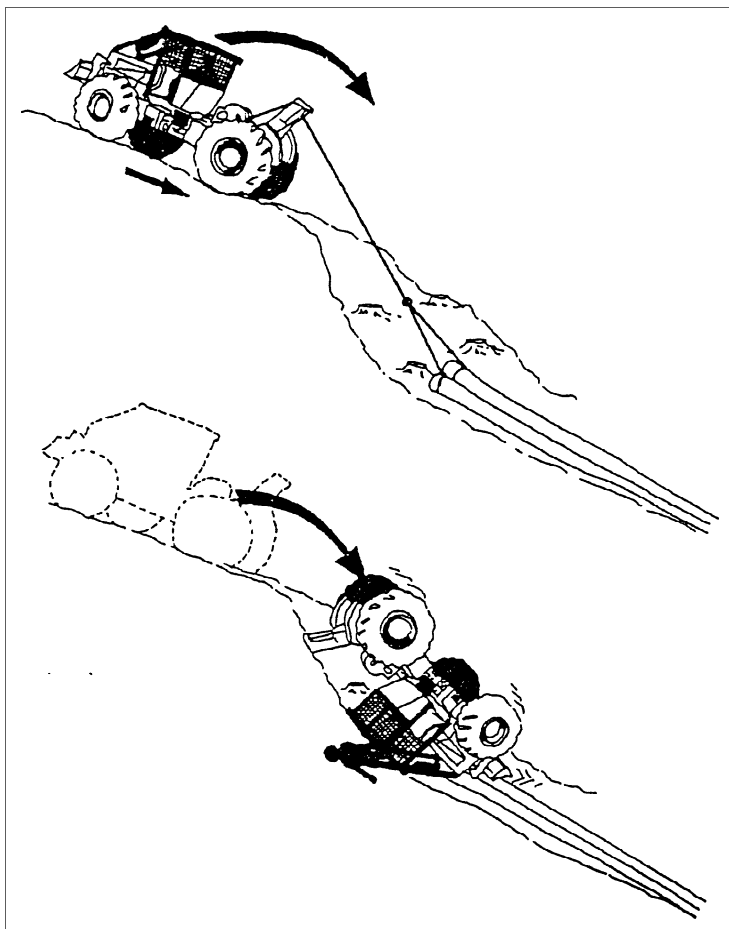
The machine was fitted with a lap-type seat belt but the driver had not been told to wear it.

## Accident Prevention

The *Safety Code for Forest Operations, Part 3: Logging* states:

“Clause 27.1

Only those trained and competent in the use of skidders, or holding a valid and approved training



qualification from an approved authority, or training under adequate supervision, shall be permitted as operators.”

“Clause 26.3

As at 1 August 1992, seat belts to NZS 5401: 1992 or other operator restraint devices approved by an inspector shall be fitted on all machines. Such safety restraints shall be worn at all times while the machine is in motion.”

As well as the 18 branches spread throughout the country, OSH also has an Inspector (Forestry) based in a sub-branch in Gisborne. His contact details are:

Des Craig  
98 Peel St, Gisborne  
Ph: (06) 868 8809  
Fax: (06) 868 8832