

Forestry Bulletin

Fatal Accidents in Logging, Forestry and Tree Work — Year Ending 30 June 1998

Logging

- A self-employed logger was having a tree pulled with a dozer away from the natural lean. He made the mistake of cutting off all the wood on the stump and, without any holding wood, the tree fell sideways and the feller was hit as he tried to escape.
- A dozer was being used as a mobile tailhold in a hauler operation. A worker was ahead of the dozer when the blade came off the stump it was parked behind and the dozer moved forward and crushed him. Brakes had not been applied.
- As a skidder turned off a track into the cutover, it hit an old log which caused the machine to roll. The operator, who was not wearing a seat belt, was thrown out and crushed.
- The operator was out of the cab of a skidder parked on a slope. The skidder started to roll backwards down the slope. The operator tried to get on the machine to try and stop it and the roll continued trapping a breakerout working below and crushing him.

Land clearing for planting

- A dozer was clearing ground for planting. The owner of the land and the dozer operator had walked the boundaries before work commenced. Unfortunately, the dozer was driven over a 10 metre deep drop into the head of a creek. The operator was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown out. He died of heart failure due to the impact.

Tree clearing

- Neighbouring farmers were preparing for a new fence line. One was felling an unwanted pine tree on the new line. As the tree fell, he was struck by a falling branch. It appears that he made an inaccurate assessment of the tree.

Firewood

- A firewood gatherer was preparing to fell a tree. There was a large branch hanging down so he swung on it to break it off. The branch broke off suddenly and struck the left side of his chest as he fell backwards. He died of multiple chest injuries.
- Incorrect cutting techniques and no escape path resulted in the death of a willow firewood gatherer. He was felling a 370 mm willow. The tree split up 4 metres, slid back and struck the feller on the head. Willows are notorious for splitting.

Portable plant

- An elderly firewood gatherer was riding in the ram working area of a firewood splitter. The splitter was attached to a tractor and controls of the splitter were still live. The splitter was accidentally activated which resulted in severe haemorrhaging of the passenger. Cause of death was haemorrhage and heart attack.