

Dangers in Skid Work

Except where full-length extraction and cartage is carried out, skid workers have tended to have their work area cut down. This is due to a number of factors including greater room being required for log sorts, reduction in area to save on land preparation costs and, in hauler operations, moving to steeper terrain or onto unstable soils.

It is important that basic safety steps are taken to cut down danger. Fractures and crushing are the most common accidents and loss of footing and chainsaw lacerations also feature.

General

- Organise the work area so that workers have sufficient room to carry out their tasks without creating hazards to other workers. Have an area set aside for any maintenance required, particularly on chainsaws, clear of the main work area.
- To assist with the smooth running of the skid operation and avoid having accidents, here are a few tips of skidwork common sense:
 - Stay clear of log loaders and extraction machines.
 - Watch for swinging or suspended loads.
 - Watch for the radius of swing of boom loaders.
 - Don't pass alongside trucks being loaded.
 - Try to face the operating machines if possible.
 - Remain in view.
 - Notify the machine operator if leaving from or returning to the skid area.
- Waste such as limbs, tops and offcuts shouldn't be allowed to accumulate on skids. Such material can hinder the movement of workers causing trips and falls, impede machine movement or be dislodged or thrown up by machines.
- Watch for tension in trees before starting log making. They may be loaded due to being caught on others or the way they are lying on the skid.

Cable Logging

- Don't work under operating ropes unless in an approved protective cab.
- Only approach the drag after all rigging has stopped swinging or moving.

Machine Operators

- Machine operators approaching the skid area should slow down and note the position of skid workers. Fast approach and turns can cause logs in the drag to swing and either hit workers, move other logs or dislodge logs from stockpile.
- To allow strops to be safely removed from the drag, after dropping the drag on the skid, the rope tension should be released and the machine moved forward and stopped.
- Machine operators should take care when straddling drags or logs and moving forward as any logs disturbed can cause dangers to other skid workers.

Loaders

- No load, log or debris should be swung above or within reach of any skid worker or other machine.
- When carrying logs the operator must be aware of the turning radius to ensure that logs are not swung towards or over other skid workers or equipment.
- When using boom loaders, make sure a gap of at least 1 metre is left between the loader counterweights and any log heap or solid objects. This will ensure that persons have a safe position passing behind the loader.