

# HAZARD ALERT

## TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION ARE VITAL IN WOODLANDS OPERATIONS

*A terrible tragedy occurred in a conventional logging operation, costing the life of a skidder operator and causing severe psychological stress for a tree feller.*

The victim was very experienced, having worked in the woods most of his life. The feller worked for forty years as a tree feller and was also very experienced. These two men were close friends: they worked as a team for a number of years in many remote locations, working, traveling and occasionally living in a camp environment together.

The trees they were cutting at the time of the accident were large hardwoods. They began working in a new block, after moving their skidder into the area earlier that morning. The feller saw a dead, standing tree and decided to try to cut it down, rather than request that the skidder operator push it down. Instead of notching the tree, the feller made a straight cut at the base of the tree and the tree remained standing. He moved away from it without marking it, or asking the skidder to push it down, and continued cutting another tree, farther away.

Meanwhile, the skidder operator came to pick up other trees. He saw the dead, standing tree and did not try to push it down with his skidder. Instead, he left the skidder's cab and began placing slings around the butts of other felled trees that were on the ground. It is believed that a small gust of wind pushed the dead, standing tree over, causing it to fall and strike the skidder operator, killing him instantly.

The feller came around to see what his co-worker was doing and found him dead under the tree. Responders at the scene found the feller extremely distressed. He kept repeating, "I've killed my buddy." This accident demonstrates how the actions of one worker on a team can directly impact the health and safety of co-workers, and is especially important in conventional logging operations.



**Always remove all known hazards, have a cutting plan and stick to it. Most importantly, maintain clear communications. Your life, and your co-workers', depends on it.**

### Safety Rules and Recommendations

- Dead, standing trees should be identified and pushed to the ground by skidders before work begins.
- If a tree cannot be felled by a skidder and must be cut by hand, fellers should notch trees properly and ensure they fell them completely to the ground. If a loose branch is hanging from a dead tree, workers must stay away from it completely.
- Any dangerous trees that are to be left standing should be clearly marked with ribbons. All workers must stay out of the marked area, and no trees can be felled into the marked area.