

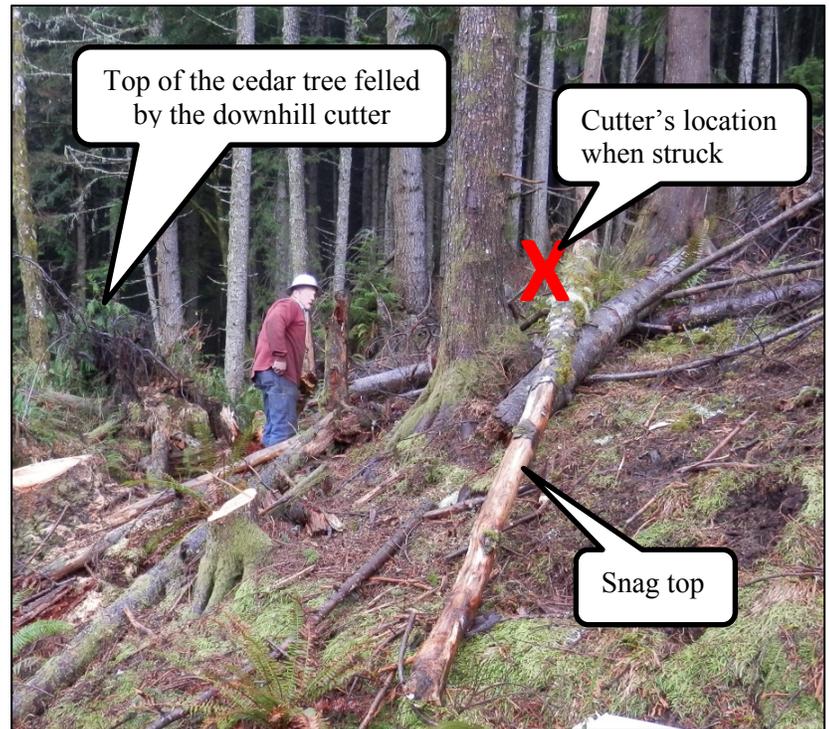
Timber Cutter Severely Injured when Struck by Snag

Task: Falling trees

Occupation: Timber cutter

Release Date: August 22, 2014

On January 7, 2014, a 56-year-old timber cutter was severely injured when he was struck by the top of a falling snag. Two cutters, each with over 20 years' experience, were working at a jobsite. One of these cutters, the victim, was preparing to cut a tree. Working downhill from the victim, the other cutter felled a 59 foot 6 inch tall cedar tree. As this tree was falling, it fell several feet uphill from the cutter's intended direction and hit a dead alder snag, knocking it over. Part of the top of the snag broke off as the snag was falling and struck the victim on his head. He suffered a severe traumatic, disabling brain injury. The incident investigator determined that the two cutters were working 81 feet from each other, less than the required minimum two tree lengths, which in this incident would have been 120 feet.



Safety Requirements

During cutting operations:

- The employer must assign work areas so that the distance between work areas is at least two tree lengths of the trees being felled.

See [WAC 296-54-539\(1\)\(b\)](#).

Recommended Safe Practices

- Safe falling means planning ahead. Ensure that all workers are clear of the hazardous area before falling begins.
- Poor work practices can lead to injuries. Your safety and that of other crew members depends on decisions that you make about how you do your work.

Resources*

- Free workplace safety and health consultations are available from L&I at: www.SafetyConsult.Lni.wa.gov
- Free video from Labor & Industries, "Be Safe in the Woods" at: www.LNI.BeSafeintheWoods
- Accident Prevention Program for Cutting Operations. Washington State Logger Safety Initiative at: www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainingPrevention/Programs/files/LSICuttingOperationsSampleAPP.doc

*These internet links have been shortened for publication and will not operate in your web browser as written. To access these resources, please go to the SHARP publications page at www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Pubs/, click on *Logging*, open this document and follow the links from there. Prepared by Randy Clark, WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5 U60 OH008487-09).

