

## Falling Log Causes Internal Injuries and Fractures Hip of Worker

**Industry:** Landscaping Services  
**Task:** Clearing Debris

**Release Date:** September 26, 2011  
**Occupation:** Laborer

A 22-year-old laborer fractured his hip and lacerated his liver and kidneys when an 80 lb log fell 40 feet onto his back. The worker was clearing debris from a fir tree that was being removed. He was working directly below a coworker who was “chunking” the tree down when the incident occurred. The injured worker said that he and his coworker were very comfortable working around each other which led to them not communicating effectively. Since the injury the worker has struggled with feelings of worth and self-esteem as he now depends on his parents to complete tasks he normally would do. “I can’t even carry two gallons of milk without hurting my back.” After two and a half months, he is not cleared to work and will possibly have pain in his back for the rest of his life. At this point he does not believe he will be able to return to his job. The employer did not have a written Accident Prevention Program addressing safe work practices at the time of the incident.



### Employer Requirements

- Develop a formal written accident prevention program that is tailored to the needs of your particular workplace and to the types of hazards involved. See [WAC 296-800-14005](#).
- Develop, supervise, implement, and enforce effective safety and health training programs. See [WAC 296-800-14020](#).
- Ensure workplaces are free from recognized hazards (see [WAC 296-800-11005](#)). For arborist and arboricultural safety standards see [ANSI Z133.1](#).
- Employee work areas must be arranged, and employee duties organized, so the actions of one employee do not create a hazard for any other employee. See [WAC296-54-513](#) (Logging Industry).

### Recommendations

- Perform a hazard assessment of the work area before starting work.
- Stay out of any area that exposes you to overhead dangers.
- If working under an elevated worker is necessary, be sure there is visual and/or verbal communication before starting the job.
- If a coworker is working below you, do not perform tasks that could result in anything falling on the worker. Resume tasks only when others have moved a safe distance away.

### Resources

- Free workplace safety and health consultations are available from L&I at: [www.SafetyConsult.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.SafetyConsult.Lni.wa.gov)
- For tree trimming and removal safety tips from OSHA go to: [http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_Hurricane\\_Facts/tree\\_trimming\\_safety.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/tree_trimming_safety.pdf)
- An Accident Prevention Program Analysis form is available at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Forms/pdf/417150af.pdf>
- OSHA Tree Care Industry Standards can be viewed at: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/treecare/index.html>

### Need more information?

Please contact Eric Jalonen,  
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