

Chaser Run Over by Loader

Task: Branding and painting logs

Occupation: Chaser

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A 64-year-old chaser was severely injured when his leg was run over by a log loader. The chaser had over 25 years' experience working in the logging industry. On the day of the incident, the chaser, his employer, and a log truck driver were working at a landing on a Forest Service timber sale. The employer was operating a loader to place logs onto the log truck's trailer. There were piles of logs on either side of the loader. The loader was a few yards behind the trailer. The chaser was performing various tasks, including bucking, limbing, branding, and painting logs. The Forest Service requires that logs be branded and painted on both ends. The operator backed the loader up a short distance and began rearranging logs in a pile so that he could pick up the ones that he needed to load onto the trailer. At this point the chaser, who had been talking to the truck driver at the front of his truck, walked back towards the loader. The chaser later stated that he felt he should be doing something and decided that he would go to the back of the trailer and brand some logs. He did not signal the operator. As he was preparing to brand a log, he turned his back to the loader. The operator, who had the cab turned away from the chaser and could not see him, picked up several logs to load onto the truck. He then began to swing the logs around while at the same time moving the loader forward toward the trailer. He heard a scream and saw that the loader's right track had run over the chaser's left leg. Immediately he backed off and dialed 911. The chaser suffered severe crushing injuries to his leg and was hospitalized. Investigators determined that the loader's travel alarm was not functioning, making it less likely that the chaser would be aware that the loader was moving toward him.



Incident scene. The chaser was in the approximate position of the red-circled person when he was run over by the loader.

Safety Requirements

- At any time when moving logging machines, the driver must have a clear and unobstructed view of the direction of travel. When this is not possible, a signal person with a clear and unobstructed view of the direction of travel must be designated and used to direct the movement of the machine, or the machine must have an audible horn that is sounded. See [WAC 296-54-57345\(2\)](#).
- Each vehicle, machine, and piece of equipment used to perform any logging operation must be maintained in serviceable condition. See [WAC 296-54-523\(3\)](#).

Recommended Safe Practices

- Before using the loader, the operator must be able to see or know the whereabouts of all landing workers and be sure that they are out of the danger area.
- Workers must always notify the operator when they are approaching the loader and get his permission to enter the work area.
- Ensure mobile equipment travel alarms are maintained in operable condition.

Resources*

- Free workplace safety and health consultations are available from L&I at: www.SafetyConsultants.Lni.wa.gov
- Free video from Labor & Industries, "Be Safe in the Woods" at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/lni/shrl/VideoDetails.aspx?VideoID=1490>
- Accident Prevention Program for Logging Operations. Washington State Logger Safety Initiative at: <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainingPrevention/Programs/files/LSILoggingOperationsSampleAPP.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 and Christina Rappin, 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).

