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SAFETY ALERT

15-S-11

FELLER-BUNCHER DROPS TREE ON CREW MEMBER'S PICKUP TRUCK

November 2015

BACKGROUND: On a clear, summer morning in the South, a logging contractor was cutting timber with a rubber-tired feller-buncher on a final harvest. The terrain was flat, and the timber was a mature pine plantation that had a considerable amount of brush and vines.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The 37-year-old feller-buncher operator was the owner of the logging company. He had nearly 20 years of experience in the logging industry. The crew member, age 22, had just been hired, and this was his third day on the job. He had no prior experience in logging.

UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITIONS: The normal procedure in this logging operation was for crew members to park personal vehicles in the area near the company crew truck. This new crew member, however, parked his truck approximately 100 feet from the crew truck in order to utilize the shade of other trees. He parked the truck off the road in an old landing area that had been created from previous thinnings. This old landing was grown up with sweetgum and volunteer pine. Visibility in the stand of timber was very limited due to the heavy brush and vines, and the feller-buncher operator was apparently unaware of the location of the crew member's truck.

ACCIDENT: The operator selected the location to drop a tree and unknowingly dropped it on the top of the crew member's pickup truck. The large tree completely crushed the cab of the truck.



INJURY: Fortunately, the crew member was not in the truck, so no one was injured. The pickup truck was a total loss.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Park company vehicles and personal vehicles in designated areas on the job site. Check in at the landing area first if visiting an active logging operation.
- Feller-buncher operators should be on high alert for vehicles and personnel when harvesting close to woods roads and landings.
- Conduct comprehensive safety training for new, inexperienced employees and ensure that they fully understand and comply with all company safety policies and procedures. (See <http://loggingsafety.com/content/first-year-safety-program> for an example of a first-year-employee logging safety program.)

Reviewed by:
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Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.