



## FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

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## SAFETY ALERT

**16-S-6**

### LANDOWNER NEARLY KILLED AT LOG DECK

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**BACKGROUND:** On a clear summer day shortly after noon in the South, a loader operator on a high-production logging operation was loading treelength pine sawtimber onto a tractor-trailer

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The loader operator was approximately 30 years old and worked in his family's logging business. Although his regular job was not to run the loader, he was an experienced operator of logging equipment.

**UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITIONS:** The forestland owner decided on this day to make an unannounced inspection of the logging operation. He parked a distance away from the log deck and walked on the haul road that ran alongside the tractor-trailer that was being loaded. He intended to speak with a logging crew member he saw at a crew service vehicle down the road, beyond the loading operation. The loader operator was busy loading logs and was not aware of the landowner's presence.

**ACCIDENT:** As the loader operator was swinging a grapple of treelength sawlogs over and onto the log trailer, he suddenly noticed the landowner at the rear of a partially loaded log trailer. Surprised by the presence of the landowner and realizing that the grapple of logs was about to crush him, the operator reversed the loader controls to swing the logs away from the landowner. The loader boom reversed direction so suddenly that the forward momentum of the logs caused the logs to slide off of the loader's heel. The out-of-control logs flew over the landowner and rested across the partially loaded log trailer.

**INJURY:** The treelength logs went completely over the top of the landowner and never touched him.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:**

- Following this incident, the logging business instituted a policy requiring any crew member, upon seeing a forester, landowner, or other visitor to the tract, to announce the presence and location of that visitor to all the rest of crew members immediately via CB radio and to take action if necessary to keep the visitor from placing himself in peril.
- Additionally, the business now requires the crew's service truck and any other vehicles to be parked in locations in front of the trucks that are being loaded, so that individuals will not be tempted to walk through the loading area or the log deck to get to another vehicle during active loading operations.
- It is important to communicate a procedure that directs visitors to wear personal protective equipment and not to approach the log deck until or unless the loader operator stops the loader and grounds the grapple.
- Remember that being in a hurry can cause an equipment operator not to focus enough on his surroundings.

*Reviewed by:*

Southwide Safety Committee;

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*Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.*