

Safety and health alert

05/97 Worker injured by rolling log

Incident

In February 1997 an employee in the logging industry was docking logs near the front of a sloping log landing area out of Walpole when two logs that had been dropped off by a skidder some 9 metres up the gradient rolled down the hill. They knocked the employee over and severely crushed his left knee.

The two logs were approximately 0.6 metres in diameter, one was 14.8 metres long and the other 8.5 metres long. They are both visible in the centre foreground of the photograph showing their location after hitting the employee.

He was extremely lucky that the lead log came up against some small logs near the base of the landing.

Landing operations present hazards for a landing dockerman due to movement of machinery and logs in the dumping, sorting, stock piling and loading-out areas.

Factors

1. The gradient of the landing, was as much as 12° in one area.
2. The logs were dropped across the slope.
3. The dockerman was working down the slope from the logs being dropped.
4. The dockerman was trimming at the time, facing the opposite direction and wearing earmuffs. He did not see or hear the rolling log until it was almost upon him.

Recommendations

1. Logs should never be allowed to roll uncontrolled on a log landing.
2. Workers on foot at a log landing are particularly vulnerable to the hazards of rolling logs and an adequate system must be in place at all times to protect these persons from this hazard.

This system could include:

- (a) logs dropped by the skidder being placed on level ground or up and down the slope. NEVER across the SLOPE.
- (b) dockerman only working from the high point of the log landing.
- (c) log stops and chocks being used on any logs prone to rolling.
- (d) the dropping area being separated from the docking area by a ridge or log stops. These areas could be rotated throughout the day or for the duration that the log landing is in use.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site

www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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