

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 45

Date: February 2022	Focus Group: Lone Workers
Topic: Worksite Risks, Hidden Hazards	Issued by: Craig Fisher and Andrew Shelton

Background and Incident: A forest manager was completing survival assessments of seedlings following an aerial spray-releasing operation. Dead rank grass obscured the seedlings and a sink hole (tomo, under runner). Completely focused on the task and unaware of this property hazard the manager fell into the sink hole, right up to his chest.

Injury Details: Minor back strain.

Risk Awareness: Hidden ground hazards have a high potential for harm including fractures, concussion and/or entrapment in the sink hole. If a worker falls into one they may not be able to summon the assistance they need.

Safe Behaviours: Where site hazards are known, ensure all PCBUs are made aware of them. Consider how these hazards, such as sink-holes, might be present or appear after heavy rainfall. Understand how the hazards could impact on a lone-worker with limited communications, in the summer heat and under time pressures.

Ensure realistic controls for safe outcomes:

- Increase awareness with signage – on gates, fenced off area, stand maps and files.
- Be mindful of ‘upset conditions’ and any pressures that change the ‘riskscape’.
- Be mindful that temperature extremes sap energy and lower concentration.
- Take five minutes to assess the likely risks and review the mitigations.
- Never work without a means to summon assistance (e.g. Garmin Inreach).

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators:
2. Place on site notice board or in file:

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

