



Safetree Safety Alert

Post this alert on your workplace noticeboards. Discuss it at safety or tailgate meetings.

Preventing deaths from roll-overs during mechanised harvesting

Type of incident: Fatality in Canada from roll-over during mechanical harvesting

Date: March 2018

From: Summarises information from Canada's WorkSafeBC Forest Industry Advisory Group

What happened

In October 2017, a Canadian logger was killed while using a feller buncher to cut timber on a slope. The machine tipped over backwards, blocking the exit and leaving the operator no escape route when the machine caught fire.

The causes of this accident are still being investigated. But the question arises: What could we do now to prevent a similar accident happening in New Zealand? This alert summarises suggestions from the WorkSafeBC Forest Industry Advisory Group.

Lessons learnt

Make sure workers have another way to get out if the cab door is blocked during roll-over

Every piece of mobile equipment must have an alternate means of escape that is clearly marked both inside and outside the cab. The exit must not be located on the same side as the cab door. It must be able to be opened from inside or out without tools.

Employers should test this alternate exit regularly. They should train workers on how to use it and should ensure a worker's level of fitness and size doesn't prevent them using the exit.

Make sure there is immediate access to the right rescue equipment if the worker is trapped

Employers need to think about what equipment is needed to rescue a worker trapped during a roll-over, and where this equipment should be stored to ensure immediate access.

In particular, if the backup exit is blocked or the worker can't move, employers need to think about what tools will be needed to get the worker out. For example, specialized cutters might be needed to pierce cab windows. There should also be a fire extinguisher within easy reach of the rescue crew.

Where possible, rescue equipment should be attached to the machine itself for ease of access.



Put in place controls to reduce the risk of workers getting hurt during roll-overs

Include roll-overs in your risk management plan for the specific site. This plan should include where and when specific machinery can be used.

Make sure mobile equipment has rollover protection, and structures to guard against falling, flying or intruding objects. Any gear carried inside the cab needs to be secured so it doesn't turn into missiles during a roll-over (tools, hardhats, thermos etc.)

Have an effective plan in place for workers who work alone

This plan should include that workers must always carry a functioning communication device. The worker must have a designated contact person to check in with on a regular, agreed schedule. The designated contact must have a copy of the working-alone procedure and the emergency-response plan.

This emergency plan should include the information needed to guide emergency services to the site quickly. If the worker fails to check in, the contact must initiate the search procedures outlined in the plan.

More information

[See more details of the comments from WorkSafeBC \(See page 3 of the newsletter\)](#)

[See Safetree's Working Alone factsheet](#)