

FATALITY ALERT

– PRELIMINARY INFORMATION --

BCFSC # 2015-05-23 Fatality

On May 23rd, a lowbed truck driver was fatally injured in the Prince George area while trying to move trees that had fallen across a forest resource road. The driver was outside of the lowbed directing another truck that was pulling the trees when something broke loose and he was struck by one of trees.

Our condolences go out to the family and co-workers of the deceased worker.

WorkSafeBC and the Coroner's Service are investigating this incident and the results will be released as soon as possible.

Although the details of this incident are still unknown, take the time to review the following safety information:

- 1) Most incidents happen during “upset conditions”. Upset conditions can be defined as unusual work conditions that are not part of normal, everyday operations. Examples include mechanical breakdowns, a road being blocked or sudden changes in weather. These situations create high risk working conditions that require careful planning and risk assessment to deal with safely.
- 2) Trees that have blown down or recently fallen are often under tension and can react unexpectedly when cut or moved. These situations are common in the industry and have led to numerous incidents including cuts from chainsaw kickbacks, workers being struck by trees and equipment damage. Make sure you are properly trained and equipped to handle the risks associated with the stored energy in these trees.
- 3) Snags have always been a hazard. However, Mountain Pine Beetle infestations and wildfires increase the occurrence of these danger trees. Be on the lookout for these hazardous trees and have them removed or controlled as soon as possible. Review your company's procedures to make sure you're prepared to do this safely.
- 4) Emergencies can occur at unexpected times and in unfamiliar areas. Make sure your emergency response plan has the appropriate information and procedures to cover all of your work activities. Communication is a key part of every emergency response plan. Make sure you can communicate with Emergency Services no matter where your work is located.
- 5) Any time you are doing an activity like pulling trees identify the locations where a person could be struck if the chain or rope broke and then identify the safe zones. Assess if the tree will move freely when pulled or if it is going to be placed under more tension which increases the chance of an unexpected reaction.

