

# SAFETY ALERT

## Forestry Harvesting Operations

### Tire change mishap knocks out worker

**Location:** Houston, BC area

**Date:** November 3, 2017

**Details of Close Call / Serious Incident:** An employee was changing a flat on his maintenance truck (a “dually” with an inner rear tire that was flat). He set the park brake and put the vehicle in 4WD so it would not roll while he was working under it.

He was out on the worksite and so tried to find a good spot to do the tire change. The road was a little uneven and there was snow on the ground – making it hard to stabilize the bottle jack that was being used to lift the truck.

When the employee was set up to perform the task, he first radioed a nearby supervisor to advise he was changing a tire, and gave the supervisor an estimated time frame for when he should be done.

When the employee was under the vehicle and the rear tire was loose, the bottle jack became unstable – causing the vehicle to come down. This knocked the tire out of the employee’s hand and the tire hit him in the head. He was knocked unconscious by the impact.

Once he regained consciousness he called the supervisor and was subsequently taken to a clinic for medical assessment. It was confirmed that the employee had a concussion. He was instructed to take it easy until he was feeling better again. The employee was allowed to go back to work – but on light duty until he is feeling recovered fully.

#### **Hazards present:**

- Working alone/in isolation while performing maintenance under a vehicle.
- Uneven/snowy ground presented a challenge when trying to set the bottle jack.
- The bottle jack doesn’t have a wide base but it can lift a heavier load than other jacks and is therefore the jack selected when changing tires on heavier vehicles.
- Working in awkward positions/limited space – making it more difficult to do the maintenance.

## **Learnings & Suggestions:**

- Store a thick piece of 12" x 12" plywood on board for the base of the jack.
- Truck should be supported by jack stands in these types of conditions.
- Develop specific instructions on how each tire change situation should be assessed and proper supervision maintained (when the tire change is in difficult circumstances).
- Look into different equipment for this type of job – so that all hazards are eliminated when performing routine maintenance.
- Ensure Safe Work Procedures are followed when doing maintenance under a vehicle.
- Provide needed PPE for the job. A regular hard hat may not be practical, so add a mechanic's "low profile" hard hat to on board equipment. Add a chin strap, if not equipped.

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