

Forest Industry Safety Alert

Cable Yarding: Stay out of the bight!

Location: Southern Vancouver Island

Date of Incident / Close Call: June 17, 2014

Details of Incident / Close Call: Very recently, and in the past year or so, TimberWest reports experiencing a number of serious incidents and close calls in cable yarding operations where the primary cause has been that workers were not in a safe position / in the clear - around moving lines and logs / yarding turns. For example:

- Chaser began to clear haulback without getting clear confirmation/direction from hooktender. Chaser put himself in the bight, and was struck in the right shoulder by the eye of the haulback.
- While setting chokers on a grapple yarder and fighting a hang-up, the hooktender instructed the grapple yarder operator to bring the grapple backwards with the log choked. The worker then told the operator to "Hold It", after which the radio went silent. The hooktender was found on the ground, conscious but on all fours. He had a large laceration on the left side of his forehead and his left eye was swollen shut. It wasn't clear if the hooker was struck by the turn or something coming off the turn, but was likely too close either way.
- Hook tender set back choker on two logs. Rigging slinger set front choker on one log. Rigging slinger blew go ahead whistles (3 short). Engineer went ahead on turn and logs started to swing (upend). Rigging slinger blew one whistle (stop), but log struck both workers who were standing together.

Learnings and Suggestions: In all cases, it has been determined that the primary cause was that workers were not properly in the clear, as per their job safety procedures. Notable secondary causes in some cases were poor communication between various co-workers onsite. Cardinal rule on all cable yarding sides is **STAY OUT OF THE BIGHT**. All ground workers must be safely in the clear **BEFORE** going ahead or back on any moving lines.

For more information on this submitted alert: TimberWest Forest Corp. (250) 716-3700

