

Idaho Logging Safety Newsletter

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Brad Little, Governor

Russell Barron, Administrator

Not A Bad View From His Office Window

Kyle Freedman (pictured below) proudly showed off his recently purchased Tigercat shovel logger. He said it had been a real game changer in the steep, brushy, and rocky ground they were working on. More about Kyle on Page 2.



High Country Logging

High Country Logging owner Kyle Freedman (pictured on the front page) shared a little wisdom with the Logging Safety team, who recently showed up on his job. Kyle said they have had to adapt their approach to logging specific units to remain productive. His Tigercat shovel logger does shovel logging but also bunches for the skidder to make it more productive. He mentioned another great addition has been the chest pack radios that his crew wears, you can see his in the picture. Kyle said that not only can he keep track of everyone on the job, but he can also answer questions that come up, instantly. This allows him to stay productive in the cab while keeping everything lined out and moving. They have been having some trouble with their handheld State Comm. radio being able to reach State Comm. from some locations. Kyle purchased a bigger unit to install in a pickup and so far, they have been able to call in from all their locations. Safety conscious and productive, it sounds like High Country Logging is the place to be. Notice the view in the picture background, you can see the whole McCall-Donnelly valley.

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What Do We Do Now?

by Stan Leach

Things don't always go as planned in the woods. We must constantly adapt to the situation and the resources we have available. A recent accident brought up a question I hadn't seriously considered before. A sawyer was badly hurt down in a line strip. The crew called State Comm. and requested a long-line helicopter to hoist the patient.

Unfortunately, the long-line ship was unavailable. This can happen for several reasons. Helicopters take a lot of maintenance; if it was being worked on or waiting for parts, it couldn't fly. If the weather is bad at the accident site or coming over the mountains from Kalispell, that could also ground them. That long-line ship is a tremendous asset, and they are getting more and more calls for service, so there is a good chance that the ship is already out on a rescue and is unavailable. The question becomes, what do we do now?

The Life Flight helicopter was on its way, but the patient was down in the unit. The crew carefully put the patient on a backboard, carried him out to a road, and then drove him to the helicopter landing zone. The patient, although severely injured, is expected to recover. The crew made a judgment based on the circumstances and handled it to the best of their ability. The question that was asked of me was, is that the right thing to do in that situation?

It is easy to look at things after the fact when you have time to think about them and aren't dealing with the emotion of someone being hurt. Depending on the injuries, another possible approach might be to meet the helicopter crew at the landing zone, take the EMTs to the patient and let them direct the rescue from there. That way, you have professionally trained personnel who deal with this type of situation on a regular basis to assess the patient and assist with transportation.

This crew successfully rescued the injured sawyer. Good job! The thing for the rest of us to realize is that the rescue plan we have laid out ahead of time may not work out during an accident. Have a safety meeting with your crew—it's been thirty days since your last one—and talk about what to do if things don't go as originally planned. The more we talk about things like this, the better prepared we are to deal with them. Be safe out there!

Felling Practices

By Wayne Lynn

This shouldn't be a surprise. Pre-cutting trees for production purposes is prohibited. This is nothing new. Timber falling is dangerous work and pre-cutting for production purposes makes it worse. Unfortunately, some fallers feel pressured to take chances to keep up with production, while others are posting videos on social media that appear to be sport falling and showing off. Either way, it is wrong. Whether referred to as pre-cutting, posting, setting up, or domino falling, it increases the chance of a faller or someone else being hit by a tree unexpectedly.

It is permissible to use one tree to safely push another where this is a safer option than using wedges, but this still carries increased risk. In the image below, the faller was planning to use the larger tree to push the smaller one because he determined that the small size and uphill lean would not safely permit wedging it downhill. Unfortunately, the smaller tree came down backward on its own as he was cutting the push tree. Remember, if you determine this method is your safest option, you are behind a pre-cut tree that could come down unexpectedly.

If you are using unsafe practices, STOP! If you observe someone else doing so, say something. The faller is not the only person at risk from this type of activity. What about others who will be working in the area? Those pre-cut trees may not always fall immediately and are left waiting for the right conditions to fall on someone unexpectedly.

Consider this: Other people have to pay if someone is injured due to unsafe practices. Insurance will cover the claim, but the cost will be passed on to the employer and all the other contractors covered by that insurer through higher premiums to recover their losses. It does pay to be safe.



The Importance of First Aid Training

By Kelly Waalkens

Larry Miller started working in the logging industry, following in his father's footsteps in the early 1960s. He told me this story, and I thought it should be shared with everyone. Larry was hired to finish a strip that another lumberjack had started. Another logger went down with him. When they arrived, there was a blood-stained denim jacket lying there, and this was the story Larry was told. The man the jacket belonged to was deceased. Unfortunately, he fell backward onto a sharp, broken, or cut-off limb attached to a log. The limb impaled the poor guy through his lower back, puncturing one of his kidneys. They initiated a rescue operation, and soon, an ambulance with more help arrived. The volunteer EMS crew brought a gurney. One of the loggers suggested lifting the injured man slightly and letting him cut off the branch, leaving it in to plug the hole. The rescue crew didn't think this was a good plan, so they lifted the man off the branch and placed him on the stretcher. Once the impaled object was removed, he bled to death very quickly.

Now, I am not going to say that if this severely injured man had been handled differently, he would have indeed survived. But I am going to say that if they had chosen to leave the impaled object in him, his chances would have been better. We've learned a lot from the past. Today, rescue crews have much more training; even the volunteer services undergo extensive training. Of course, mistakes are still made. But if an accident like this happens today, the response should be quicker and hopefully more efficient. A helicopter with a highly trained crew will be sent out along with a ground ambulance will be sent.

The loggers on the scene have all been trained in basic first aid. They should also have an excellent First Aid Kit and a backboard with 2 blankets. All of today's loggers should be able to recognize and hopefully stop deadly bleeding. We have all been taught how to monitor and treat for shock. They will still have to make decisions like; do we wait for help or cut the limb off now (leaving it impaled) and get the victim on a backboard? Do we have enough people to move a severely injured person to the helipad safely? The numbers tell us that not all rescue operations will be successful, but they also tell us we are more successful now than before. As always, if we can prevent the accident from happening in the first place, we are much better off.

FEEDBACK

We have received a lot of feedback from you, who have attended the first aid classes we help put on every spring. Several of you have had to use your first aid skills in emergencies this year. A couple of logging accidents were successfully dealt with, and people helped with a couple of car or truck wrecks. We really appreciate hearing those stories. We teach 25-30 classes each year, so it is good to hear that those skills are being used. Thank you for sharing your stories with us. The following story really made my day.

Midnight Rescue

By Stan Leach

Nathan Mangum of Orofino has been attending first aid classes ever since he started working in the woods. This year, after listening to the infant choking and CPR sections, he came up at the break to ask a couple of questions about the process. It turns out he has a new baby in his house. He called me a few months after the classes were over to tell me his story. Nathan said he was sound asleep when he heard his wife hollering for him, saying that the baby wasn't breathing. He jumped up and ran to the baby's room, where he found her starting to turn blue. At first, he wasn't sure what to do, but then he remembered the process we showed in class. He turned her over and started doing the back slaps with her tilted down. It didn't work at first, but with a little more force, he was able to get the object out that she was choking on.

Nathan said the true impact of what happened didn't set in until later. They live almost twenty minutes out of town. If they had to drive the baby in or wait for an ambulance, it may have been too late. He said he was very thankful he had some idea what to do.

Nathan said, "I'll be honest, I have sometimes grumbled about having to attend the classes every year, but I will pay more attention now."

This brings up a good point. Not everyone is a logger or has access to our classes. If you know someone who is watching an infant or toddler, encourage them to take a class that covers infant choking and CPR. The Red Cross offers free online classes that include these topics or have them check out local in-person classes. You never know, the person you save might be the same one that you get to walk down the aisle in the future. Good work, Nathan! Thanks for sharing with us.

Eye Protection

By Kelly Waalkens

A few weeks before the Twin Towers fell, I had a logging accident. The job was to saw a right of way above Wallace. It was hot; looking at me now, it may be hard to believe I ever worked up a sweat, but it happened. Normally, the bug eye style is my preference, but I was trying out some safety glasses that day. Sweat was running down the lenses, so I took them off as I walked back down a log I had just bucked off. I looked down and saw a pig ear, I put the glasses back on but didn't take time to seat them properly. When the saw touched the knot, a piece of it flew up and went under the lens, hit my eye, and embedded itself under the eyelid. I reached up and could feel this big lump under my eyelid. Remembering what I was taught in the first aid classes, I covered my eye with my hand and tried to walk out without moving my eyes; it was a very slow process. After I walked for about a quarter mile, the excavator operator saw me and came to my assistance. We went to my regular doctor who removed the chunk from under my eyelid and then sent me to an eye doctor, who then sent me to a specialist in Spokane. Basically, the piece of wood did laser surgery without the laser. I had astigmatism that lasted for about a year, and I missed over a week of work. The cause of this accident was being in a hurry and not taking a couple seconds to put my glasses on right. At the end of the day, as Steve says in the safety classes, we are the ones responsible for our own safety. Find eye protection that works for you and be sure to wear it.

Scale Pad Bolts

By Stan Leach

We have had a couple more truck tip-overs this year caused by broken scale pad bolts. Please get in the habit of checking them on a regular basis. When the trailer is down and you are making the rounds, thumping the tires to check for flats, thump the top of those bolts. They will definitely sound different if they are broken partway down the hole versus being intact and tight.

I'm not sure why we are having more of these bolts break than in the past. I have been discussing it with the drivers I meet, and the opinions vary. Is it poor bolt quality, rougher roads, or higher speeds? We often work in tough conditions and are pushing and pulling the trucks a lot. Does the unloading process strain the bolts? I don't have a definitive answer yet, but I am interested in your thoughts. We owe it to our families and the people we share the roads with to keep the trucks upright and traveling safely. My contact info is on page 2. Let me know what you think.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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LOG SAFE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

