

Idaho Logging Safety Newsletter

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Brad Little, Governor

Russell S. Barron, Administrator



For those of you who haven't already met these gentlemen, let me introduce them to you. On the left is Ron Orr, a longtime logger who is now retired, and he shared a powerful message about how he saved two different people from choking. Now, Ron is quite a character. I had called the first time, and he agreed to be filmed, but when I called back to get his address for filming day, he said he was living in Florida. There was a long pause on my end as I tried to sort out that information. My consternation was solved when he busted out laughing. He lives in Lewiston, a much shorter drive than Florida. He had many great logging stories to share on the day we filmed. I really enjoyed listening and learning about his career.



To the right is Bob Normington, pictured in his office, the cab of a Link Belt Loader that he runs for Steve's Extreme Excavation out of Potlatch, Idaho. Bob helped us film a segment for the upcoming first aid classes. He has learned a great deal during his 46-year-long logging career and is willing to share some of that knowledge to help keep everyone safe. We truly appreciate the time and effort of these two men, as well as all the rest of you who helped us compile materials for the first aid classes that will start next March.

STAN LEACH

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Lights On for Safety

By: Steve Gibson

Idaho drivers are required to use their headlights in the following situations: From sunset to sunrise (headlights must be on during nighttime), adverse weather conditions (use headlights when visibility is less than 1,000 feet due to rain, fog, snow, or other weather conditions) and when wipers are in use (if your windshield wipers are on continuously, you should also have your headlights on).

High beam regulations in Idaho, also have specific rules regarding high beam headlights: dim high beams(you must dim your high beams when approaching an oncoming vehicle within 500 feet or when following another vehicle within 200 feet), avoid use in urban areas (high beams should not be used in well-lit urban areas where street lighting is sufficient.)

Newer trucks have daytime running lights (DRL) for your safety. DRL's are essentially low-energy headlights that are programmed to illuminate whenever your vehicle or truck is in operation. They reduce your risk of being involved in a crash, particularly head-on collisions, during the daytime. You see oncoming traffic more easily, and the traffic or four-legged critters see you more easily. Headlights/DRLs reduce your risks of daytime frontal collisions. Making yourself visible means you're less likely to have a driver drift into your lane when approaching you. Headlights also reduce your risks of daytime rear-end collisions. If your taillights are lit up, you're less likely to be rear-ended by someone. Remember that most DRLs don't activate the taillights, so this is a headlight-specific advantage.

DRLs keep you from driving at dawn/dusk/night/in poor weather without lights. This is a DRL-specific advantage, although it also exists in vehicles with automatic headlights. If your truck always has its lights on or if it can turn them on for you, you won't get caught driving in low light levels without them, which both increases your own safety and prevents the risk of being pulled over for driving without your headlights at dusk, dawn, or in nighttime darkness accidentally.

In the past few years, I have updated my personal vehicles with newer updated LED headlights that offer several advantages, including improved brightness and clarity, longer lifespan, and greater energy efficiency. They provide greatly enhanced safety and comfort while driving at night. If common halogen lamps are similar to the glow of a sunset, then LED headlights are like the bright first light at sunrise. Compared to traditional dim halogen lamps, LED headlights have higher brightness and a color temperature closer to natural white light. This helps us perceive objects more accurately, reduces eye fatigue, and provides clearer visibility. LED headlights offer superior long-distance visibility for nighttime driving. With a high-beam range of 350-600 feet—nearly double the 250-400 feet range of traditional halogen lamps—they allow drivers to see farther ahead and detect potential hazards sooner, such as deer and rocks in the road. This extended visibility can provide extra reaction time, helping prevent accidents and enhancing safety during nighttime or early morning driving on a dark and muddy backwoods road. Please consider updating your truck's lighting to enhance your own safety, and also consider keeping your headlights on at all times.



This Is Going to Hurt!

By: Wayne Lynn

Here in Idaho, eight loggers have been injured from falling off their machines this year. Machines play a large role in logging operations, and falls from them are a common cause of injuries in our industry. Whether it be a fall from high up on a loader or just a few feet from a smaller machine, there is the risk of injury if you fall. Please consider the following to avoid falls.



- Maintain three points of contact with hands and feet at all times.
- Face the machine as you climb up and down. Be aware of where you are placing your hands and feet, especially on unfamiliar machines.
- Do you have adequate handrails or grab irons as you turn around and exit the cab? One of the guys I work with showed me that he has to use the door latch to do this. He plans to have a handrail installed so he can maintain three points of contact while exiting the cab, which is a much safer alternative.
- Keep steps and handrails free of oil, grease, mud, and snow, and ensure they are not bent or damaged.
- Do not climb with objects such as a lunch box in your hands because they will compromise your ability to grip. Set items on the tracks, walkways, floorboards, and other surfaces as you climb. A rope or cord can also be used to hoist items up or lower them down.
- How do you clean the windshield? Hanging on with one hand and reaching across from the cab isn't the safest way. A telescoping squeegee with a durable design and a long handle should be used for cleaning windows, as it allows for easy reach from the ground and reduces the risk of falling.
- Wear traction footwear with ankle support. Be aware that cork boots provide very poor traction on smooth metal surfaces.
- Use anti-slip treads on walkways and replace as necessary.
- On large machines, such as yarders, a stable log or longbutts may be used to create steps and provide better access to ladders.
- Be careful and don't rush. A fall could put you out of work for a long time.

Climbing on and off a machine is probably one of the most dangerous things you will do at work. Be safe and avoid injuries.



Marsh Hill Trucking, LLC. owner John Law pushes up his stake extensions while waiting for his turn at the loader. This saves a little time and prevents a long fall for anyone climbing up on the trailer if they slip. A few other drivers are doing this. It's a great idea!

Mental Health Awareness

By: Kelly Waalkens

I would venture to guess that most of us have seen things that we wish we hadn't witnessed. I've talked to many of you about accidents that have occurred and the rescue response for the injured person. The harsh reality is that sometimes it doesn't go like we had hoped, and we struggle with guilt. At other times, we just struggle with what we have seen. In this case, we need to learn from these difficult situations and share with others what we have learned. As we approach winter, it seems that people tend to become a little depressed. If you feel this way, please know you are not alone. Seek out someone you can talk to. Another fact is that if you're struggling with your emotions, drugs and alcohol are only going to make it worse. There are people out there who really care and will take the time to listen if you seek them out. Remember, taking care of yourself can also help others.

Traction

By: Stan Leach

Good traction is crucial to success, whether it is on your feet, your pickup, or your track-mounted machine. How many of you have had on slick shoes when on ice? This often results in a rapid transition to ground level (fall). Slick tires on your pickup often lead to a closer inspection of the ditch. Not having good ice cleats on your machine can have devastating consequences.

If you aren't already working with snow on your job, you soon will be. You need to get prepared for that. Ideally, track machines will be making full ground contact, where numerous ice cleats dig in to hold the machine in place, but conditions on the ground often change that. Let's say you have a hump in the road, and your machine starts up, lifting the front off the ground. Then, as you break over the midpoint, you may only have a couple of feet of track making contact with the ground. What if there is only one cleat in that couple of feet span? Is that enough to hold your 85,000-pound machine on the road? If you have to cross a ditch, you can end up with only two points of contact with the rest of the track in the air. Those two points can be very short depending on the sharpness of the ditch. That doesn't mean you can't cross these; it just means you need to be prepared.

Besides having adequate ice cleats for the conditions you are working in, you can reduce your chance of sliding by positioning your machine correctly. Attachments, such as a processor head or grapple, can exert a significant sideways force if they are swinging from side to side. Secure them so they aren't swinging and pull them in closer to the cab. The farther the head is out from the center of a machine, the more force it can exert. Think back to when you last put on pad bolts. A two-foot ratchet handle will only put them on so tight, but if you slide on a six-foot cheater, you can get them to torque specs with the same amount of effort. That same force works on your machine; the closer the force is, the less effect it has. Another thing you can do if you have a dirt cut slope is to put a little dirt on the road to improve traction.

Outsloping on the haul roads can also present challenges. Most of our roads are built by excavators, so we don't get as much compaction on the fill slope as we used to. Then, as we start going over the roads with our trucks and machines, we get a better compaction of the fill. This often results in a more severe outslope than what was intended. In the summer, this is usually not a problem, but in the winter, it's a different story. If you have a road that was originally 2-3 % outslope, it can now be 5-7% or worse. This means you have a lot more force, pulling you towards the edge as you try to walk down the road. Now, if you combine that with an uphill or downhill slope and a cross ditch or roller dip, you have that much more force applied with that many fewer ice cleats holding you, that is a recipe for disaster.

We are trying to work with staff at the Idaho Department of Labor and United States Forest Service to address the outsloping issue. We need to ensure they understand what is actually happening on the ground. For now, be realistic when assessing a job you plan to log in the winter. Look for road problems and see if you can get them addressed before you start. If a situation is too dangerous, I would encourage you to say no. Maybe that is a job to do next summer. That is easy to say when it is not my crew or machinery that may be setting. However, as employers, we have a responsibility not to put our employees and subcontractors into situations we know are unreasonably dangerous.

The Logging Safety Crew

Stan Leach – Program Manager

208-512-2354

Stan.leach@dopl.idaho.gov

Serving the Clearwater area

Wayne Lynn

208-553-6207

Wayne.lynn@dopl.idaho.gov

Serving Deary & St. Maries

Kelly Waalkens

208-449-5203

Kelly.waalkens@dopl.idaho.gov

Serving Plummer & Bonners Ferry

Steve Gibson

208-271-6872

Steve.gibson@dopl.idaho.gov

**Serving White Bird, Emmett,
Soda Springs, and Salmon**

Hard Hats and Chaps

By: Kelly Waalkens

So far, we've had an average year in terms of statistics regarding logging accidents in our state. Unfortunately, we've still had several. As I speak with many of you, one thing that stands out is the importance of PPE, or Personal Protective Equipment. In my area alone (from Plummer to the Canadian Border), I know of two loggers who say their hard hats probably saved their lives, (after seeing the dents in the hard hats, I'm pretty sure they are correct). Think about that the next time you leave your pickup or get out of your machine without one. Also, once your metal hard hat has a large dent, remove it from service. It may be compromised and unable to protect you in the future. It may be harder to tell if a plastic hard hat is compromised because they tend to retain their shape. If you know the plastic hard hat took a big hit, even if it looks good, replace it. Remember, all hard hats must have a Z-89 rating. Now we are going to talk about chaps. If you are running a chainsaw, you are required to wear chaps. One logger found this out the hard way this year. 18 stitches in his leg just above his knee. Simply put, he didn't take the time to put them on because he was in a hurry and was just going to run the saw for a few seconds. Again, you and you alone are responsible for your actions. Don't be wrongly influenced by others. Peer pressure has caused way too much grief in our industry. Loggers' chaps need to have an F-1897 rating on them to be effective. Also, once your chaps have been damaged, be sure to replace them. They are designed to stop a saw once, not repeatedly. Pitch and oil can also compromise the effectiveness of chaps. If the fibers inside the chap are stuck together, it won't stop a saw chain. Be sure to take care of whatever PPE is required for your job so it can take care of you should the need arise.



Picture perfect! More truck drivers are using the Si-wash correctly. This is great, let's keep the logs in contact with the Si-wash and off our truck drivers.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.
Call (208) 512-2354 or reach us online:
stan.leach@dopl.idaho.gov

LOG SAFE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

