

Idaho Logging Safety Newsletter

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Brad Little, Governor

Russell S. Barron, Administrator



To the left are **Nathan, Destiny, and Maddison Mangum**. Nathan shared his powerful story of saving his daughter, who was choking, that we showed in this year's first aid video. Maddison, we wish you a long and happy life. Thank you to the Mangums.

To the right is **Joshua Banez**, who took time on a snowy day to let us film his story about how his eye protection saved him from a more serious injury. Thank you, Joshua.



Think About the Next Guy

By Wayne Lynn

Who wants to work under this mess? No one I know, including the faller I met with on the day I took this picture. This situation isn't an isolated case and many of you have seen it. Falling timber and setting chokers are dangerous enough without any added risk.

There is a saying, "Make it easy on the next guy." We need to think that way. Machines are usually the first to harvest in a unit, and what they don't get is often finished with hand fallers and line crews. Keep the next guy in mind. What hazards are you leaving for those working here after you leave? Are you going to create hazards for the timber fallers? What about the line crew that must set up on the road above and pull every turn over this? Cutting these trees before pushing slash, chunks, and long butts against them would have been much safer for everyone. Would you want to work below this?



Door # 1, Door # 2 or Door # 3

By Steve Gibson

No, it's not a game show, but the reality is that **time** is of the essence when looking urgently for a Fire Extinguisher. In a recent issue, Wayne Lynn wrote about a machine operator's fire that could be extinguished. The operator then bought two new five-pound fire extinguishers instead of just one as required for the machine. Having one or more backup fire extinguishers on every machine and service truck is added low cost insurance. I recently encountered a machine fire the day after a separate fire, and the outcome was not favorable.

While inspecting in the Soda Springs area, I met Cameron Newell at B&C Logging. We looked for the location of the fire extinguisher on a machine in multiple locations. Cameron commented that he has a sticker on some of his machines, "Fire Extinguisher Inside." The sticker was a simple yet great idea to allow one to gain quicker access to such a valuable tool to save and protect people and equipment. I urge you to consider labeling the location of your fire extinguishers on machines and service trucks with a simple sticker visible on the outside door or hatch for everyone's quick knowledge so that even someone not familiar with your machine or truck can assist.

As a reminder, all fire extinguishers must be inspected monthly and documented in writing. I suggest using the Blue Logging Safety Meeting notebook as a reminder and noting it on the extinguisher or its tag.

A Boy Scout in The Bahamas

By Stan Leach

Earlier this year, my wife and I were lucky enough to sneak away on a tropical vacation with some close friends. Sun, sea, good company—what could go wrong? Well, a lot. But thanks to one fast-moving, flipper-powered hero, what could've been a tragedy turned into something pretty amazing.

Picture this: we're out on the ocean, enjoying a day of snorkeling. The water is gorgeous, the sun's out, and everyone's in vacation mode. Some of us had already jumped in to explore, while others were kicking back on the boat with drinks and good vibes. I had just popped up from the water to clear my snorkel when I heard someone yelling for help. I looked around, and my stomach dropped. A woman was floating face-down in the water, not moving, not reacting.

Cue the human torpedo: Chris Gerhart. Now, Chris isn't just your average vacationer. He's a Clearwater-area FPA advisor, a former Boy Scout, and a longtime Scout leader in the Orofino area. Also, this guy can **swim**. Wearing fins, he motored through the water like an aquatic superhero, cutting through the current faster than anyone else could react. Chris reached the woman in seconds and raised her head above water with help from one of the boat crew. Together, they started the challenging swim back, fighting the current the entire way while keeping her afloat. They reached the boat, but the job wasn't done. They hauled the woman up the stairs, completely unconscious, while the crew scrambled, clearly unsure of what to do next. Luckily, fate had stacked the deck that day. A trauma nurse, a doctor, an EMT, and a family member trained in CPR were on board with us. Like something out of a movie, they jumped into action without missing a beat, performing CPR on the deck as the rest of us got back on board and the captain headed back to shore. It had already been several minutes. The woman's skin had turned a terrifying shade of blue-gray, and things looked grim. But after a few rounds of CPR, we saw a miracle in motion—her color started to return, she vomited seawater and stomach contents, and although she didn't regain consciousness, she was **alive**. For 45 relentless minutes, those four heroes rotated through CPR while the boat raced back. Soon after we arrived at the dock, EMTs took over and rushed her to the hospital. Two days later, we got word that she'd made it with no lasting damage and was going home. **Let that sink in.** From face-down in the ocean to flying home a few days later—alive and well—because of quick thinking, the right people in the right place, and one guy who didn't hesitate to jump in.

So here's what I took away from that day:

- **Heroes come in swim fins.** Chris's instincts, strength, and background made a huge difference. Without him, the timeline might have been too long and the current too strong.
- **CPR saves lives.** If you don't know it, learn it. You never know when you might need it, and that knowledge can keep someone alive long enough to reach help.
- **We take emergency services for granted.** In the U.S., we have well-trained, well-equipped responders. On excursions in other countries, that isn't always the case. That day reminded us just how valuable it is to be prepared, no matter where you are.

And finally, if you ever find yourself snorkeling on vacation, hope that a Boy Scout like Chris Gerhart is on the boat with you. I know I will. Chris, you're a legend. You didn't just react—you **saved a life**.

Concussion...Stroke

By Kelly Waalkens

During the first aid classes, I covered the concussion and stroke sections. I shared part of the following story. Last fall, I stopped by an old friend's place on a trip to Arizona. George had slipped on some ice while taking out the trash early one morning. He had hit his head on the sidewalk. He made it back into his house and told his wife what had happened and that he thought that he had lost consciousness. His wife watched him for signs of a concussion for a few days. The big bruise on his head disappeared, and life seemed to return to normal.

Seven weeks passed, and they were walking out to the car. George dropped the car keys; his wife picked them up, and when she handed them to him, they fell back to the ground. She looked at his face and realized he was in serious trouble. She immediately helped him lie on the ground next to the car and called 911. They transported him to the local hospital via ambulance, where they discovered a subdermal hematoma between his skull and brain. They then airlifted him to a special hospital to deal with his condition. At this hospital, they ran more tests and were preparing to do surgery to stop the bleeding on his brain. The plan was to drill a hole in his skull to relieve pressure and stop the bleeding. While they were preparing to do surgery, the surgeon discovered that the bleeding had stopped. At this point, a decision was made to hold off on surgery and treat him with medication. This was done successfully, and George was released from the hospital a few days later. The staff told George that he was the first patient to come into their facility with these conditions and be able to avoid surgery.

Looking back on the ordeal, George realizes his body had given him some warnings that he ignored. About four weeks after the fall, he had a severe headache that lasted a short time, and about a week later, it happened again. The doctors said that if George had come in at that time, they would have probably discovered the subdermal hematoma and been able to treat it successfully. Unfortunately for George, he has lasting effects from the ordeal. He has never regained full use of his left side.

Stroke is the 5th leading cause of death in the U.S. It is the third leading cause of death in women and the number one cause of adult disability. There are about 795,000 strokes in our country every year; about 610,000 of these are first-time strokes. Ischemic stroke is the most common, and this is when a blood clot blocks an artery. Subarachnoid and intracerebral hemorrhages make up the rest. It is believed by the medical community that close to 80% of the strokes in this country could be prevented.

High blood pressure is a very common factor among stroke victims. You need to make healthy lifestyle choices, such as limiting alcohol consumption and considering quitting smoking. Also, making healthy eating choices and getting enough exercise will help to ward off strokes. Finally, if you take a blow to your head, especially if you become unconscious, nauseated, vomit, disoriented, have a headache, or become excessively tired, even if the symptoms come later, it would be a wise choice to go visit your doctor.

Riding the Rigging

By Stan Leach

After a long day working in the brush, hooking tree lengths, you've accomplished a lot, but fatigue starts to set in. Ahead of you lies a steep climb up a hill littered with slash. Unlike your last job, where a nearby road allowed for an easier exit and a ride in the crummy, there's no such convenience this time.

A tempting thought crosses your mind: *What if I have the yarder pull me out?* It would undoubtedly save energy. After all, you've seen others doing it online—so it must be safe, right? **Wrong.**

Decades ago, riding the rigging was a common practice. However, the frequent accidents, injuries, and fatalities led to strict rules prohibiting it. These rules exist for a reason: The dangers of riding the rigging far outweigh the perceived convenience.

I've heard from many of you about accidents caused by workers attempting to ride the rigging instead of walking out. Consider this: If you're suspended by chokers or walking behind the rigging while holding on, you're directly beneath thousands of pounds of line and carriage. If something goes wrong, the consequences are catastrophic. Even when equipment functions properly, external factors can trigger accidents.

A logger I spoke with last summer shared a tragic incident from his past. Two hookers decided to ride the rigging out of a long line. Fully suspended by the chokers, the yarder began pulling them up. Due to breaks in the slope, the entire length of the skidding line wasn't visible. Unfortunately, the line snagged under the top of a blowdown snag. As the yarder pulled, the snag created a bow in the line. When the line finally popped loose, the sudden slack caused the carriage to slide backward. When the line became tight again, it did so with enough force to hurl the two hookers off the line. The fall was fatal for both. Mechanical failures can also lead to disaster. Lines can break, tailhold stumps can give way, and carriages can fail. While such occurrences are rare, they are devastating when someone is in harm's way. Equipment can be repaired or replaced. A life cannot.

The rules against riding the rigging were written in blood—the result of too many preventable tragedies. A steep hike out may leave you with sore muscles, but it ensures you'll live to see another day.

Take the time. Walk out. Stay safe.

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Let's Get Off To A Good Start

Hopefully, you guys will get back to logging as the snow melts. A lot is going on. Equipment needs final repairs, lowboys need to be scheduled, contracts need to be signed, and you need to replace the guy who quit two days ago. With all this pressure, please don't forget to fill out your Emergency Response Plan.

You must establish helipad coordinates in the degrees, minutes, and seconds format. Then, write simple turn-by-turn driving directions from where an ambulance will respond. Once you have written all this information down, please take a picture of it to send to all the guys on the job, including the loader guy and the contract trucks. You can easily pre-register your job with StateComm by emailing the picture to them at (statecom@dhw.idaho.gov). This info is on the front of the red book. Please don't forget to tell StateComm about the jobs you are finished with so they can take them out of your file.

If you have questions or need help, call your area Idaho Logging Safety guy; that info is listed above. Be safe out there!

Thank You!!!

By the time you read this, we will have finished the first aid classes for this year, and you will hopefully be back to work earning money instead of just spending it. It takes a lot of effort from many different people to put on these classes around the state, and I think all of us should say thank you. First, we have our partners at the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho. You see Steve Barham at the classes, and this year, you saw Executive Director Clete Edmunson, who did the intro video. We also get excellent assistance from Julie and Jolene at the ALC office. John Graham, the head of the ALE, the workers comp division, supports us by paying for the professional film crew who films and edits all the videos you see. Jordan Schram from AIS, who handles your other insurance needs, helped us with several classes.

From the Logging Safety side, we have the four Logging Safety guys, but we also had help from Wendy Rock and Megan Taylor from our Boise office. These two ladies quickly adjusted to the long hours and chaos of the first aid classes and did it with a smile. We also get support from Amy Lorenzo, the Bureau Chief of Building, Construction, and Real Estate in the Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses, the state agency we work for. She attended the class at McCall and is always working to support our program.

Next, we have businesses around the state that pay for some of the venues and donuts and cookies so that you guys don't pass out from low blood sugar. The crews in St. Maries are spoiled. They get a full breakfast courtesy of the Les Schwab there in town. The Les Schwab stores in Bonners Ferry, Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, Moscow, Grangeville, and Emmett provide donuts and, sometimes, pay for the venues we use. Jerry's Auto Parts of McCall and Council provides donuts for the McCall class. Edward Jones representatives Heidi Kruger and Elise Ehrmantrout provided cookies for the afternoon classes.

Last but certainly not least, we have the loggers who were willing to tell their stories on camera so we could share them with you. If you see any of these folks or are at any of these businesses, please tell them thank you, and thank them for supporting our industry. Now, go out and have a safe and productive logging season.

This Season's Journey

There is an old saying: a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. That is true of staying safe in the woods as well. The overall intention is to stay safe all year, but that begins with making good decisions and following safe work practices in the next ten minutes, the next day, the next week, and so on. There isn't a tree out there that is worth you getting hurt or killed. Take that first step this season with the ultimate goal of getting home to your family every night in one piece. Then make it happen by making good decisions each step of the way. We will see you out in the woods.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

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LOG SAFE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

