

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

March 2017

Common Falling Hazards

Recently, the Coast Harvest Advisory Group (CHAG) did a review of serious falling incidents and identified common causes and trends. The following hazard information is a summary of the hazards and the good practices that can be used to manage these hazards.

- Incomplete hazard assessments may have contributed to several incidents. Thorough 360 degree assessments are needed for each tree.
- Poor assessments and planning led to situations where fallers were falling trees into small openings or working on the low side of trees.
- Inadequate or missing escape routes were a factor. Have escape trails for all falling and bucking jobs and think about finding cover, not just moving far enough away from the tree.
- Many incidents were caused by branches or broken tops coming down from overhead. During the hazard assessment, include a good look up in the canopy to spot these hazards.
- When falling in second growth stands, the work usually doesn't include bucking. When bucking, a faller has the opportunity to regularly view the stand from a different perspective. These stands can have dense canopies which hide hazards well and taking the time to get out of the timber to look at the canopy regularly is encouraged.
- Bucking was identified as one of the most hazardous parts of the falling job. Misreading the pivot point was a common cause of incidents. Do not buck a tree if you have any doubts about the cuts and if they can be completed safely.
- Don't walk by hazardous conditions or behaviours. Work to fix them or notify someone who can. In some of the incidents falling partners and supervisors didn't intervene when there were some hazardous behaviours.
- Danger trees were a common theme with the incidents. Always approach the removal of danger trees from the safest sequence possible. If the assessment identifies a hazardous situation, use alternative means to remove the tree. Danger tree blasting or using logging equipment are examples.

