

FOREST INDUSTRY SAFETY ALERT

BCFSC # 2012-09-23 Fatality

It is with great sadness that the BC Forest Safety Council notifies the forestry community of our ninth direct harvesting related fatality of 2012. While working on a helicopter logging operation, a rigger was fatally injured when he was struck by a log. This incident occurred in the Bella Coola area on September 23rd.

This incident is still under investigation and the exact causes are still being determined.

Until more details are known, it is important to keep in mind the following best practices when working on a helicopter logging operation:

- Ground workers must always be aware of the possibility of falling logs or debris. Stay in the clear!
- Good communication between the ground workers and pilots is essential. Ground workers must communicate when they are in the clear and also when the situation changes and they find themselves in danger.
- Procedures should be in place to allow ground workers to stop the motion of the helicopter if they find that they are in danger. A best practice is for the ground worker to call "STOP, STOP, STOP" over the radio. This alerts the pilots to stop moving the helicopter until the worker moves into a safe location.
- When logging, the helicopter's flight path must not pass over workers. Any active roads that are flown over must have traffic control in place.
- Rotor wash from the helicopter can be powerful enough to blow down snags, rotten trees and debris from tree tops. These hazards must be identified and removed prior to starting up operations.
- The rotor wash can also create dusty conditions for ground crews and pilots. Spray down dusty areas with water to maintain visibility.

As more detail is made available, the Council will provide additional resources and information.

