

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

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

September 2019

Mechanical and Hand Falling

When hand fallers and mechanized falling equipment work together, there is the potential for safety and productivity to increase. Because different falling techniques are combined on the same block at the same time, special care must be taken to ensure that these activities do not conflict and safety is maintained on site.

This ALERT contains content from the Info Flip for *Mechanical Falling and Hand Falling*, created by the Falling Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC) and supplied by the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC). Copies of this Info Flip can be ordered from the BCFSC website by filling out the order form here:



www.bcforestsafe.org/files/ps_InjuryPreventionResourceOrderForm.pdf



A single cutblock can vary with flat and steep ground, wet and dry areas, and contrasting sizes of trees. In order to maximize safety and productivity in these variable blocks, companies use more than one method to fall timber.

Combining mechanical falling and hand falling creates challenges:

- Planning and scheduling activities takes more time when coordinating multiple groups
- One phase can create hazards for the other phase

To overcome these challenges, ensure that the following are in place:

- Planning
 - A thorough **logging plan** with hazards identified and steep slopes assessed.
 - A comprehensive **falling plan** that includes the normal requirements plus coordination between groups and the identification and control of specific hazards.
- Communication
 - Falling and harvesting **supervisors** should **work closely together** to ensure effective communication.
 - A comprehensive **pre-work** briefing must be held to ensure that everyone knows their role, hazards of the site and the plan.
 - At the end of each day, workers and supervisors should debrief the day in a **tailgate meeting** and address any needs for the next day.
 - Equipment operators, hand fallers and supervisors should be in **regular radio contact** throughout the day.
 - It is important that **hazard reports are shared** among all phases of the operation.



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- Machine Assist/Maintaining Positive Control
 - Machine operator and hand faller must go over the falling **plan for each tree** together before starting falling.
 - Ensure there is **proper communication** between faller and machine operator. The faller is always in control of work activities regarding falling of the tree.
 - After undercut and backcut have been placed, faller moves to a **pre-determined location** before the machine pushes the tree over. The faller confirms that they are clear before machine pushes over tree.
 - Prior to re-entering the area, faller must ensure that no **hazards** have been created as a result of the operation. Machine operator to direct faller when it is safe to re-enter.



When to STOP Work

Workers and supervisors MUST stop work when:

- work conditions are too hazardous to proceed safely
- proceeding may create undue hazards for themselves or others
- the falling plan is unclear
- there is uncertainty about who is responsible for the site or the plan
- phase congestion is creating hazards for other phases
- workers are outside of their comfort zone
- dangerous trees cannot be safely removed
- workers are uncertain of another worker's location
- communication with other phases has become patchy
- any legal requirements cannot be met.

Working together

As a result of machinery and hand falling working together, additional hazards can develop. See the following Safety Alert for a close call that could have resulted in a serious incident if it had not been handled appropriately.



www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3070

