

Public Health

KY FACE 95KY11001

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To: Carl Spurlock, PhD, Director and Epidemiologist, Kentucky Department for Health Services

From: Amy Scheerer, Kentucky FACE Investigator

Subject: Log Rolls Off Truck During Unloading and Strikes Logger

SUMMARY

A 52-year-old male logger was killed when he was struck by a log rolling off of his truck during the unloading process. The victim was a self-employed logger and had at least 25 years of experience.

Using the family-owned truck, he hauled a load of logs to the mill; the verticle standards on the truck trailer were approximately three feet high with the logs stacked another 3-4 feet above the standards. He arrived at the mill at approximately 9am and began the unloading procedure. One of the chains that secured the load of logs on this truck was in two pieces and needed to be unhooked on both sides of the trailer. After unhooking the chains on one side of the truck, the victim walked to the other side of the vehicle and as he was bending over to unfasten the chain attached on that side, a log fell off of the stack, striking the victim on the back of the head and pinning him on the ground. The endloader driver for the mill was a witness to the incident. The victim was transported to the hospital by emergency medical personnel and pronounced dead at 10:30am. In order to prevent similar occurrences, FACE investigators recommend:

- * Height of the stack of logs should not exceed the height of the verticle standards on the truck trailer*
- * Chains securing a load of logs should be long enough to allow loggers to unfasten chains on one side of the vehicle*
- * Written policies should be in place regarding unloading procedures for loggers at the mill*
- * Loggers should attend the Master Logger Program for education regarding OSHA logging standards and safety procedures*

INTRODUCTION

On 13 October 1995, a 52-year-old logger was killed when he was struck by a log falling from his truck. Kentucky FACE was notified of the incident on 15 October and an investigation was then initiated. A FACE investigator traveled to the site of the incident on 26 October. Interviews were held with the county coroner, the witness, and other loggers who knew the victim. The area where the truck was unloaded at the lumberyard was photographed and measured. The log truck was unavailable for inspection, however photographs of the truck taken by the county coroner were reviewed and photocopies obtained. A copy of the death certificate was obtained. One of the

managers of the lumber company was interviewed via telephone at a later time.

INVESTIGATION

The lumber company where the incident occurred has been in business for three years although the manager has been involved in logging all his life. The company purchases logs from local loggers and employs twelve workers. No written guidelines regarding unloading procedures are in place at the company for loggers doing business there, however the company does have safety policies for its own employees.

The victim was a 52-year-old male who had been a self-employed, full-time logger all his life. Other loggers who knew him expressed that he was an experienced and conscientious worker. On the day of the incident he was working alone, hauling logs for his brother-in-law, using the family-owned truck. The verticle standards on the trailer of the truck were about 36-40 inches high and the logs were stacked approximately 3-4 feet higher than the standards. One of the chains securing the load was in two pieces and needed to be unfastened on both sides of the trailer; in usual practice, one length of chain is used that is long enough to be secured in one place allowing the driver to unfasten the load on one side of the truck.

The victim hauled the load of logs to the lumberyard and arrived about 9am. The area where the logs are unloaded is level and relatively smooth. The endloader driver was in the process of unloading a nearby truck when the victim began to unhook the chains on the trailer. The witness related that the victim appeared to be in no hurry as he unfastened the chains on the driver's side, then walked around the back of the trailer to unfasten the remaining chain on the passenger side. As he bent over to unhook the chain, the load shifted, causing one of the logs on top to push off one of the logs on the edge of the stack. The log struck the victim on the back of the head and pinned him to the ground. Emergency medical personnel responded to the scene and transported the victim to the local hospital where he was pronounced dead at 10:30am.

CAUSE OF DEATH

On the death certificate the cause of death is given as head and chest injuries due to being struck by a log that fell from his truck. No autopsy was performed.

RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSION

Recommendation #1: Height of the stack of logs should not exceed the height of the verticle standards on the truck trailer.

Discussion: In this case, the logs on the truck were stacked approximately twice as high as the standards. Raising the height of the standards or lowering the height of the stack would decrease the risk of a log falling off the stack unexpectedly.

Recommendation #2: Chains securing a load of logs should be long enough to allow the driver to unfasten the chain on one side of the truck.

Discussion: Usual practice is to secure the logs on the truck with a length of chain that is long enough to allow the driver to unfasten the chain on one side of the truck which then enables the

driver to move clear of the area. In this case, the victim had to unfasten a chain on both sides of the truck, increasing the time he spent near the truckload of unsecured logs.

Recommendation #3: Written policies should be in place regarding unloading procedures for loggers at the mill.

Discussion: Written guidelines for unloading procedures at the mill would help ensure that the logs are being unloaded properly, providing a safe work environment for both the loggers and the employees of the mill.

Recommendation #4: Loggers should attend the Master Logger Program for education regarding logging standards and safety practices.

Discussion: Loggers should be aware of proper procedures and safety practices to ensure a safe work environment. For information about the Master Logger Program, contact Larry Lowe at the Kentucky Department of Natural Resources (502-564-4496).