



## FOREST RESOURCES ASSOCIATION INC.

600 JEFFERSON PLAZA, SUITE 350  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20852

PHONE: 301/838-9385

FAX: 301/838-9481

## SAFETY ALERT

06-S-18

### FORWARDER + POWERLINE = FATALITY

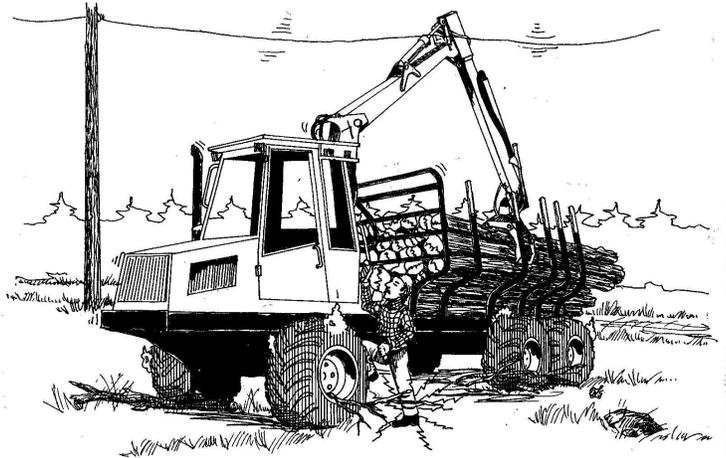
November 2006

[www.forestresources.org/MEMBERS/serpub/06-S-18.html](http://www.forestresources.org/MEMBERS/serpub/06-S-18.html)

**BACKGROUND:** A logger was forwarding wood out of a harvest site onto a landing area in an old field adjacent to a dead end lane. It was a warm and sunny Monday morning in September in the Midwest, and the crew was moving the landing site to a new location on a neighbors' property at the back of the harvest site.

#### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The 61-year old forwarder operator was the owner of his own business and had worked in the woods for over 40 years without any serious injuries or accidents. He and his two employees had informal discussions about safety but did not have regularly scheduled safety meetings. He had taken Red Cross first aid training and had taken formal courses on safe operating procedures for mechanized harvesting equipment.



#### UNSAFE ACT OR CONDITION:

The operator rested the grapple on pulpwood in the bunk of the forwarder behind the cab, leaving the boom flexed upward above the cab. He then inspected the new landing site and truck access by driving the forwarder across the field to the dead end lane immediately adjacent to an overhead power line.

**ACCIDENT:** At the edge of the field the operator attempted to do a U-turn to go back to the work area, but stopped to avoid running over some young pine trees. He then backed up the machine moving the boom under the power lines adjacent to the dead end lane. The boom caught two of the wires: the middle ground and the inner 14,000-volt phase wire. The ground wire came off, but the phase wire did not, energizing the machine. Apparently unaware of this, he traveled ahead for a short distance with the wire caught on the boom. (At this point the tires on the forwarder must have started to smoke—they were burned.) The operator then stopped the machine and exited the cab with the fire extinguisher, apparently still unaware of the power line on his machine. He was electrocuted when he climbed down the ladder and made contact with the ground.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:

- Never operate wheeled or tracked logging equipment within ten feet of an overhead power line. High voltage lines must always be kept at least ten feet away from *any point of contact* on the machine.
- Scout unfamiliar ground on foot to determine safety hazards prior to entering the area with equipment.
- Do not exit a machine in contact with a high voltage line. Stay in the cab until help arrives. (In this case, the machine was still running when emergency personnel arrived on the scene. OSHA inspectors determined that if the operator had stayed in the cab he would probably not have died.)

*Reviewed by:*

Steve Jarvis

FRA Director of Forestry Programs

*Please follow equipment manufacturers' recommendations for safe operation and maintenance procedures.*