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SAFETY ALERT

10-S-9

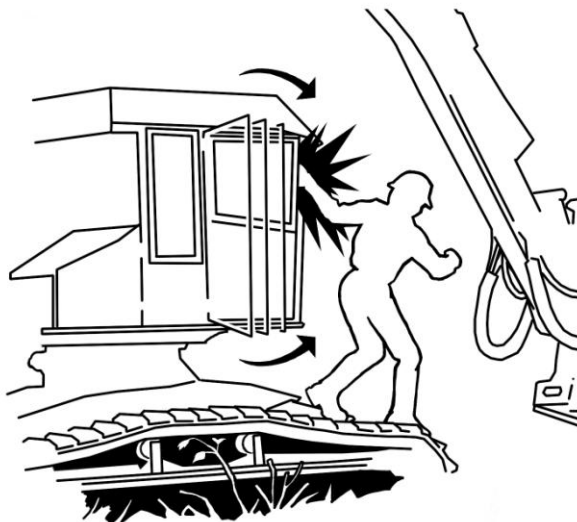
OPERATOR FRACTURES FINGERS EXITING HARVESTER

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www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/10-s-9.html

BACKGROUND: On a wet spring day in the Appalachians, a logging contractor operating a harvester-processor was exiting the cab to replace a damaged saw bar.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: The 35-year-old operator had two years of logging experience. He had attended the required courses to become a “certified” logger and had several years’ experience operating heavy equipment on gas line construction. He had no history of previous injuries.



UNSAFE ACT & CONDITION: The original cab door had been replaced 6 months prior with one from a similar model processor. The “hold open” lock on the replacement door did not align exactly with the cab latch, but it would work if the operator manually forced the pin to engage. In addition, the handhold on the outside door jamb had been knocked off and never replaced. After opening the cab door, the operator failed to engage the “hold open” lock pin fully. The handhold on the outside of the cab was missing, so the operator gripped the inside of the door jamb for support while stepping down from the cab.

ACCIDENT: The door closed on the operator’s left hand, fracturing the middle and index fingers above the knuckle. The operator went to the local hospital for treatment. X-rays were taken and the hand was tightly wrapped. The operator returned to work the next day, but productivity was limited due to the injury. A full recovery was expected.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This incident is a classic example of the importance of replacing broken or non-functional safety devices. If the door lock had worked properly, the locking pin would have engaged automatically; if the hand support bar had been in place, the operator’s hand would have been out of “the line of fire.” Maintain safety devices and repair or replace them immediately as they become damaged or broken.

Reviewed by:
Rick Meyer
Appalachian/Southwide Region Manager

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