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## SAFETY ALERT

**09-S-14**

### **TIRE RUPTURE KNOCKS TRUCK DRIVER DOWN**

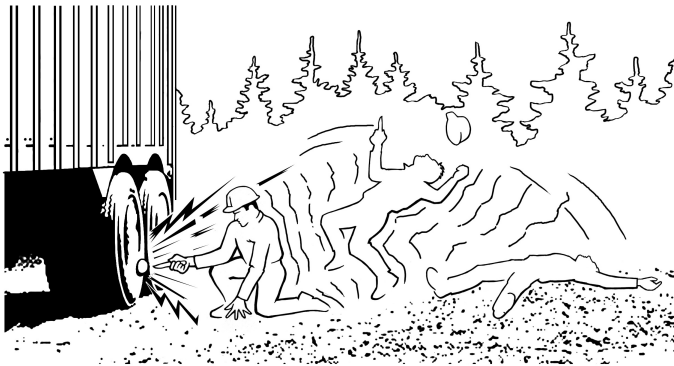
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[www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/09-s-14.html](http://www.forestresources.org/members/serpub/09-s-14.html)

**BACKGROUND:** On a spring day in the Southeast, a wood residue hauler was examining the tires on his tractor-trailer.

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The 76-year-old chip/hogfuel driver had been involved in wood fiber trucking for most of his life. He was very experienced, and he was the owner/operator of a single truck and trailer.

**UNSAFE ACTS AND CONDITION:** The driver noticed an air bubble that he thought was confined to an outer, thin layer of a trailer tire on the sidewall, approximately 4 to 6 inches above the tread. (The driver observed these infrequent air bubbles or blisters occasionally swelling as a tire heated up during the working day. On rare occasions the layers or plies could apparently separate in a tire and fill with air in a small pocket.) He had found over the years that he could release the air inside the bubble by cutting a small, shallow slit with his pocket knife—the air would escape from the bubble, and the bulge would disappear, and there would be no noticeable loss of tire pressure.



**ACCIDENT:** Unlike other times when he put a slight slit in the truck tire, this time the tire ruptured. The force of the air escaping from the tire blew the truck driver backward approximately 10 feet, and he landed on the ground.

**INJURIES:** While the tire did not completely blow apart, a 6- to 8-inch

slit was evident from where the tire had ruptured. As a result of being blown backward, the truck driver developed chronic back pain. He began wearing a lumbar support.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION:** Inspect tires regularly for correct air pressure, and check for possible sidewall blisters, bubbles, or soft spots. If a tire sidewall is bulging or blistered, it is weakened or damaged and should be replaced immediately. Resist the temptation to perform unauthorized “fixes” to problem tires—your personal safety and that of others are at stake. Wear safety glasses when inflating truck tires or adjusting tire air pressure.

*Reviewed by:*

Rick Meyer

Southeastern/Southcentral Region Manager