



# FELLER BUNCHER FIRE

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**SAFETY ALERT • SEPTEMBER 2021**

**21-S-15**

## BACKGROUND

During the summer in the Lake States Region, a logging operator was felling trees. The weather conditions at the time were dry, and the region was experiencing a prolonged drought. These environmental conditions created a perfect environment for fire.

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The feller buncher operator has been performing work in all kinds of weather conditions over his career in the logging industry.

## UNSAFE ACT

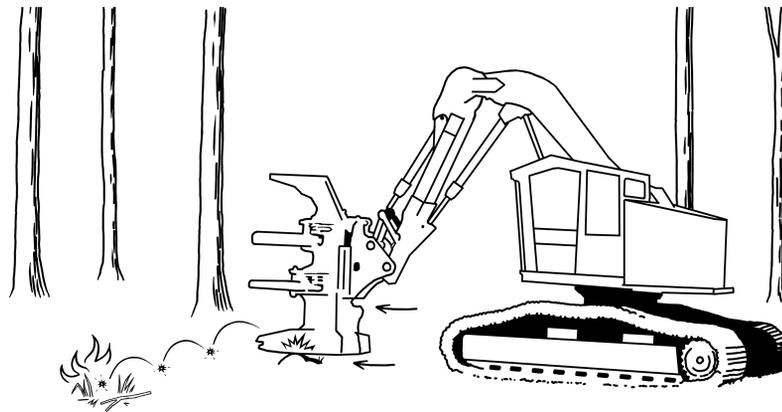
While felling trees, the operator of the feller buncher struck a rock with the saw head and created a spark that ignited debris on the forest floor.

## UNSAFE CONSEQUENCE AND ACTIONS

The result of the operator striking the rock started a fire. The next morning the logging crew noticed the fire and contacted the local natural resources department. The agency immediately disbursed a fire crew to the site, where they bulldozed fire lines to contain the fire. The fire was then extinguished by a trained wildland fire fighting crew.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION

- Be aware that sparks from a blade/saw/shear hitting a rock could start a fire.
- Have fire suppression equipment on hand.
- Make sure that all heavy equipment and trucks are equipped with working fire extinguishers and pump cans. Note that local natural resource departments may have water bladder bags that may be available.
- Ensure that all heavy logging equipment is clean. Remove built-up oil and debris from saw heads, from beneath the machine, and engine compartments.
- Perform equipment maintenance. Inspect exhaust systems to ensure that all spark arresters are intact and working properly.
- Inspect the work area prior to leaving the site for signs of fire, such as smoke or flames.
- Park logging equipment in areas free of slash, grass, or other flammable debris.
- During extreme, dry weather conditions, consider working during early morning hours and avoid operations during hot afternoons especially during windy conditions.



This Safety Alert analyzes an injury in accordance with the chain of events represented by the five dominoes above. Pioneer industry safety experts H.W. Heinrich and Alfred Lateiner developed this accident analysis system to provide a graphic sense of how injuries can be avoided. Their methodology has been accepted by safety professionals worldwide.

**Safety Meeting Report**

*Topic(s) Discussed:*

*Comments / Recommendations:*

*Date:*

*Company:*

*Names of Employees Attending:*

*Meeting Conducted by:*

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

*signature*