



HIGH RISK WHILE SECURING A LOAD

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SAFETY ALERT • MARCH 2022

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BACKGROUND

On a clear spring day in the Appalachians, a timber harvesting operation was actively working. The loader operator was engaged in loading a tractor-trailer with two bunks of 20' pulpwood. The first bunk was loaded, and the loader operator began to load the second bunk.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The loader operator was in his early 50's and had been working in the logging industry for over 30 years. The contracted truck driver was also in his 50's and had been hauling wood for several years. It is unknown what formal safety training either of the workers had.

UNSAFE ACT

The front bunk had been loaded, and the truck driver approached the truck on the far side of the trailer and began to unroll his tie-down straps. The loader operator could not see the driver and wasn't unaware that he had walked close to the trailer. The driver wasn't wearing a hardhat or other safety equipment.

CLOSE CALL

The company forester, arriving on to the job, observed the situation. He saw the grapple, full of wood, carried high over the trailer while the driver was busy working on the opposite side. The forester moved quickly to get the loader operator's attention and stopped the loading process. No accident occurred, but the situation presented a high risk. If the wood had slipped or a hydraulic line broke, there could have been a serious injury or fatality.

INJURY

None. The owner of the crew was grateful that the forester intervened.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CORRECTION

1. Always wear the proper PPE in the landing area and the woods.
2. Never assume an operator knows where you are.
3. Always make eye contact with the operator and communicate that it is safe to approach the area.
4. Establish universal hand signals between crew members when voice commands can't be heard.
5. Always move the truck away from the loader and in a safe place before securing the load.

Originally published by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, [click here](#). Details to look for in link:
 Figure 1. Diagram of dual-line tether system
 Photo 1. Bunching head used in incident
 Photo 2. Chains hooked to tether machine



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