

Safety Briefing for April 2026

Topic: DEAD WOOD AND SNAGS - LOOK UP!

Overhead hazards in the logging woods have wreaked havoc on our forest industry for years. Many wives have become widows when their husbands were struck by fallen or thrown objects from above. Dead trees and snags are a major safety issue in the woods. An overhead hazard incident or being struck from above can prove to be catastrophic. Usually, a ‘struck-by’ incident involves the upper body, which includes the head, neck, and the spinal column. As an industry, we have seen a rise in incidents involving dead trees and snags. Whether the job is fully mechanized or a manual operation using chainsaws, the risk from above is present. Many of the recent incidents have involved logging crews with mechanized felling equipment. With that said, dead trees and snags affect everyone in the woods. The best way to address this issue is to raise awareness. Forest industry owners and managers should continually keep employees aware of the dangers and consequences of overhead hazards that lurk in their workplaces. Risk must be identified and dealt with to prevent a loss. Please take the time to have a safety briefing with your crew on **OVERHEAD HAZARDS. LOOK UP!!**

- Use approved and well-maintained personal protective equipment (PPE) for head protection.
- Look and scan at least 50 ahead on your ground path. Look for vines that could affect standing timber.
- Look and scan for at least 100 feet ahead for all overhead hazards, especially dead trees and snags.
- Do not place your body under anything that can fall due to gravity or the loss of hydraulic pressure.
- Maintain at least two tree lengths from all felling areas. (300 feet or 100 yards)
- Be visible, wear high visibility clothing.
- Maintain communication with everyone in the work area.
- Never walk into a work area with running or moving equipment until the equipment is stopped, the engine is cut off, and the hydraulic attachments are grounded.

The Heads Up for Hazards program is a great way to start and maintain your crew’s awareness of overhead hazards and possibly death from above. Let’s focus a little deeper on how to deal with the risk from dead trees and snags on our logging jobs. The life you save may be your own!!

- Dead trees and snags shall be removed when at all possible.
- If the situation is too dangerous, isolate and flag the affected area; no one is allowed near the hazard.
- Use mechanical means to remove dead trees and snags. Never attempt to manually remove such hazards when the mechanical option is available!

- If mechanical help can't access the area of the deadwood, assess the situation. Is the tree stable enough to be put on the ground manually? Your 5-part felling plan will help you make a good decision!!
- If the tree can be safely cut, it is recommended that you make your face-notch "belt-high". Using a higher-than-normal face-notch lets the timber-cutter stand erect while making his back-cut. The simple fact is that this technique involves less exposure of the spinal column. Being "bent over" in a standard felling position exposes the spinal column from your head to your tailbone. If you stand up, that exposed area is reduced by half. Looking up is also easier if you are standing.
- Don't force a dead tree. Hitting a wedge in a dead tree may cause debris to fall from its top. I usually cut the tree with its front lean, which will give you the option to make an accurate path of fall, one side or the other. It is very important that you avoid hitting adjacent timber in fear of thrown or flying objects from above.
- What type of back-cut are you going to use? It is recommended to use a conventional back-cut on dead trees. Dead trees are dead FIBER! The controlled-release back-cut will not work effectively if the decayed hinge breaks; again, use your felling plan.
- ESCAPE from the falling snag! Eyes to the sky!!
- **REVIEW rule number 3. DO NOT MANUALLY FELL DEAD TREES AND SNAGS IF MECHANIZED EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE!**

The risk of dead trees and snags has always been present in the logging woods. Dead wood has accounted for many injuries and deaths in our industry. The use of high-quality, well-maintained PPE helps reduce injuries from above. More importantly, if the employee is trained to recognize and properly deal with a situation, his PPE will become his second line of defense. Good decisions lead to reduced risk. Reducing risk reduces the likelihood of an injury. Until next time, **LOOK UP AGAIN!**

\$AFETY PAYS

SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

COMPANY NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Open Meeting & Present safety topic: DEAD WOOD AND SNAGS - LOOK UP!

Employees present:

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MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____



FORESTRY MUTUAL
INSURANCE COMPANY

Safety Briefing for May 2026

Topic: Pneumatic Nail Gun Safety

Nail guns drive nails and staples into many different types of building materials. Improper use can lead to serious injuries or fatalities.

Hazards

The operator, coworkers, and visitors in work areas are at risk. Eyes, hands, and fingers are especially at risk. Nails and staples can:

- Splinter or blow out fragments from the material.
- Puncture the back of the material.
- Fire completely through the material and strike workers behind the nailing surface.
- Pose contact hazards, such as nails striking electrical wires.

Two Nail Gun Types

1. **Sequential guns:** they require the nose (work piece contact) to be depressed before the trigger is pulled.
 - Two-step sequence makes accidental firing less likely.
 - Can be used for most nailing tasks.
2. **Contact tools:** The tool fires anytime the trigger and the nose (work piece contact) are both depressed together.
 - Trigger can be held down to allow “bump firing”.
 - Use for nailing on flat surfaces.

CAUTION - If the trigger is depressed, the tool will fire anytime the nose is depressed; it can also cause unwanted double firing of nails.

Safe Work Practices and PPE

- Follow the manufacturer’s tool labels and operating manual.
- Wear safety glasses with side shields.
- Never defeat or modify safety features.
- Keep fingers away from the trigger when not driving nails.
- Sequential tools have reduced the risk of accidental and double-firing.
- Avoid line of fire hazards in front of and behind material
 - position yourself (especially your free hand) out of the line of fire.
 - Never point a nail gun at anyone. Watch for coworkers behind the nailing surface.
- Disconnect the gun to perform maintenance, move to another work area, or clear jams.
- Train on safe operating procedures, proper body placement, and correct PPE use.
- NOTE: The tool must meet applicable OSHA guarding standards.

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SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

COMPANY NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Open Meeting & Present safety topic: Pneumatic Nail Gun Safety

Employees present:

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MEETING CHAIRED BY: _____



FORESTRY MUTUAL
INSURANCE COMPANY

Safety Briefing for June 2026

Topic: Heat-Related Illness

Introduction: I BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW that the body burns calories and produces heat to keep its temperature at 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. In a hot environment or during vigorous physical activity, the body will rid itself of excess heat. Two effective ways it does this are sweating and blood vessel dilation. When sweat evaporates from the skin, you begin to cool off. When blood vessels dilate, blood is brought to the skin surface to release heat.

Background: Heat-related illness takes several forms. Heat rash occurs when sweat ducts get clogged. Heat cramps are painful muscle spasms caused by loss of electrolytes from heavy sweating. If employees develop these conditions, immediately get them out of the heat so they can rest. The next stage of heat-related illness may not be far away. Heat syncope, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke develop from prolonged exposure to heat. A victim of heat syncope faints when blood flow to the brain is decreased.

What must an employee know: When the body loses too much water and salt, heat exhaustion sets in. Signs include weakness, dizziness, nausea, headache, heavy sweating, clammy skin, and slightly elevated body temperature.

Hot Tips to Cool Conditions

As a supervisor or an employee, you should know how to recognize a victim of heat-related illness. Evaluate the symptoms and follow these first aid actions:

Heat cramps: Have the employee sip water or a diluted sports drink. Gently stretch the muscle.

Heat syncope: Have the employee lie down in a cool area.

Heat exhaustion: ***Lay the employee down in a cool area with their*** legs raised. Remove excessive layers of clothing. Give up to 1 liter of water. Do not give the employee anything to drink if they vomit. Cool the worker with cold, wet cloths and a fan.

Heatstroke: Call for medical help immediately. While you wait for help to arrive, move the employee to a cool place, remove clothing down to underwear, and apply ice packs at the neck, armpits, and groin. Cover the employee with wet towels or cloths, or spray them with cool water, and fan the employee to help the dampness evaporate quickly.

Catch It Early

Awareness is vital to prevent heat-illness. Supervisors and employees need to watch for warning signs. Employees adapt to the heat, but they usually know their limitations, and supervisors should never push beyond those limits. Employees can take other preventive measures to combat the heat:

- ❑ Eat light. The more calories you take in, the more body heat you produce.
- ❑ Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Drink at least 8 ounces per half hour.
- ❑ Choose the proper type and amount of clothing. Cotton allows skin to breathe and absorbs sweat. Wide-brimmed hats protect from direct sunlight.

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