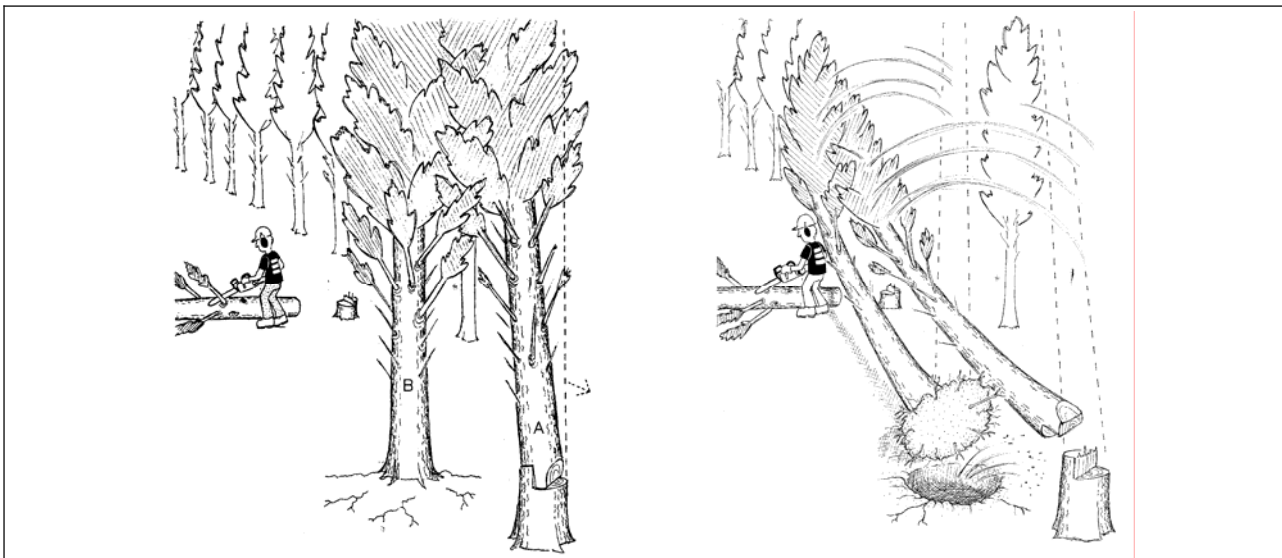




## ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

No. 15, July 2006

### Poor felling practices kill forestry worker



#### The accident

A forest worker was killed when he was struck from behind by two trees – one that had been hung-up and the other cropped.

The victim had achieved the National Certificate in Forest Harvesting. His training records from 1992 to 2005 indicate he was an experienced and qualified forest worker.

#### What happened

As shown in the pictures above, tree (A) [approximately 300 mm diameter] has sat back leaning on a cropped tree (B). A felling wedge was not inserted in the back-cut because of the deep scarf. The victim moved

forward of the cut-up and hung-up tree to fell and trim another tree. During this procedure tree (B), the cut-up tree, has uprooted, resulting in both trees falling and striking the victim as he was trimming the third tree with his back to a significant hazard. He received fatal injuries.

#### Safe work practices for hung-up and cut-up trees

- A hung-up or cut-up tree shall not be left standing. The feller shall not leave the area before the tree has been brought to the ground, other than to seek assistance to complete the job.

- Machinery should be used to assist in felling hung-up or cut-up trees where it is practicable and safe to do so.
  - No person shall be within two tree lengths of the intended or likely direction of fall of any hung-up or cut-up tree with the exception of machinery operators involved in felling the tree. Operators must not leave their machine's cab until the hung-up or cut-up tree is felled.
  - Never work forward of or under cut-up, hung-up or naturally heavy leaning trees. Seek assistance where practicable.
- Always follow on site safety procedures.
  - All fellers are to have an effective communication system to gain assistance in an emergency.
  - The investigation into this accident revealed evidence of a number of trees with deep scarfs exceeding the standard  $\frac{1}{4}$  to a  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the tree's diameter. Always use the correct size felling wedge for the trees being felled.
  - Maintain compliance with the *Best Practice Guidelines for Tree Felling* available from the Forestry Industry Training Organisation in Rotorua.