

# WASHINGTON STATE LOGGER SAFETY INITIATIVE

Logger Safety Initiative

Keeping Washington loggers safe.

## Preventing fatalities in the nation's most dangerous job

The Logger Safety Initiative (LSI) focuses on a “safety first” culture for all manual logging employers and workers. To do this, workplace safety must be treated as a first priority and a shared responsibility throughout the industry.

If you are part of the LSI program, you are no stranger to the dangers of manual logging. In fact, you may have known some, if not all, of the seven loggers that were killed on-the-job in 2014 in Washington. Serious injuries and fatalities hit everyone hard.

One way to promote a “safety first” culture is by training workers on how to work safely in the woods. Here's how one employer is making the change.

Rick Harper has been cutting timber for over 30 years, and as the owner of R. Harper Cutting, has seen his share of injuries and close calls. Rick wanted to find a safer way to train timber fallers. He knew that making changes would require a financial investment and personal dedication.

Training a new timber faller in all the nuances of the trade is a time consuming and costly commitment. For working company owners like Rick, this can be a frustratingly long process. However, it's not safe to send manual cutters out alone until they are trained in the possible hazards and circumstances they might encounter.

The LSI program requires new timber fallers work one-on-one with an experienced cutter for a minimum of 30 days. To meet this requirement, Rick hired a retired timber faller with a good safety record to train his newly hired workers on the safest methods to perform timber cutting. After the initial training, 120 days of close supervision is required by the LSI to complete the training.

Rick found a way to manage without really being there by using GoPro\* real time video cameras. By having the cutters wear the cameras on their hard-hats, he can see what they see, guide their work in real time or review it later and use the footage for training purposes. There is no substitution for on-the-ground checks, but as an owner who also falls timber this is a way to check on cutters more frequently. When Rick personally encounters a falling difficulty, he wears a camera to record his own work and later uses the footage as a training tool.

Rick is working hard so new cutters won't develop unsafe habits or practices. Rick's innovative use of the cameras help reinforce the importance of training and building a culture of safety in the woods – hopefully reducing the fatal statistics for the nation's most dangerous job.



Rick Harper, Owner  
R. Harper Cutting

\*Washington State Department of Labor & Industries does not endorse any specific manufacturer or product.  
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