

Choker Setter Dies After Being Struck by Haywire

Task: Stringing haywire

Occupation: Choker setter

Release Date: October 22, 2013

A 32-year-old choker setter with no previous logging experience was struck by the haywire and later died. On his first day on the job, the victim was shotgun cable logging with a slack pulling motorized carriage. He was working with two other choker setters, who were also new to logging with only a few weeks' experience. They were preparing to make a road change and move the skyline. The haywire was attached to a choker on the carriage and sent out to the crew. The haywire was unhooked from the choker, and the three choker setters pulled the haywire downhill from the carriage, coiled the excess haywire, and secured the end of the haywire to the base of a tree that was to be used as the next tail hold or anchor tree for the skyline. When the victim and the two other choker setters moved downhill away from the coiled haywire, the victim let the hook tender know they were in the clear. The hook



Incident scene: X indicates victim's location. Black line indicates the approximate position of the haywire running from the tail hold on the left to the landing uphill out of the photo on the right. The black circle indicates the haywire coil location above the victim.

tender then signaled the yarder operator to go ahead on the haywire. As the cable was being pulled by the yarder, the haywire coil became tangled, which caused the line to tighten and fly downhill. All three choker setters were in the bight of the haywire line – the hazardous zone – when the line snapped taut. The victim was struck in the abdomen and knocked downhill by the haywire. Another choker setter was struck in the chin by the coiled haywire ball. The victim was taken to a medical facility where he was treated and released. He returned home, where his condition worsened. He did not seek further medical care. Five days later he died at home from complications of injury to his abdomen.

Safety Requirements

- Employees must be in the clear of logs, root wads, chunks, hazardous trees, rolling material and rigging before the go-ahead signal is given and must stay in the clear until all rigging movement has stopped. See WAC 296-54-577(4).
- The employer must provide safety training for each employee. See WAC 296-54-507(1).
- Report the death, probable death of an employee, or the in-patient hospitalization of an employee within 8 hours. See WAC 296-800-32005.

Recommended Safe Practices

- Have an experienced person directly supervise the rigging crew.
- Train inexperienced individuals and crews to understand and recognize the hazard of being in the bight of lines.
- Crew members must always find a safe position in the clear away from the bight of lines.

Resources*

- Free workplace safety and health consultations are available from L&I at: www.SafetyConsult.Lni.wa.gov
- Free video from Labor and Industries: Be Safe in the Woods at: www.LNI.BeSafeintheWoods
- Free handbook from Oregon OSHA: Yarding and Loading Handbook at: www.OR.OSHA.YardingandLoading
- Free handbook on cable yarding systems by WorkSafe BC at: www.worksafeBC.CableYardingSystems
- Free video on finding a safe position while cable yarding by WorkSafe BC at: www2.WorkSafeBC.SafePosition

*These internet links have been shortened for publication and will not operate in your web browser as written. To access these resources, please go to the SHARP publications page at www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Pubs/, click on *Logging*, open this document and follow the links from there. Prepared by Randy Clark, WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5 U60 OH008487-09).

