

Chaser Dies When Crushed Between Two Logs

Task: Unhooking chokers **Occupation:** Chaser **Release Date:** 2019

In September 2018, a 31-year-old chaser died when he was crushed between two logs while working on the landing of a cable logging operation. He had worked in the logging industry for over six years. The yarder engineer brought in a turn of four logs held by three chokers with two short-end singles and one long-end bonus. As soon as the logs hit the landing, the chaser moved in to unbell them. He did not make eye contact with the engineer or wait to make sure the logs were going to stay in place. He stepped in between the two logs choked together (“bonus”). As he attempted to unhook the two logs, one of the short-end single choked logs slid back downhill. The movement of this log caused all the chokers to tighten up, which lifted the logs off the ground. The two logs he was standing between came together, crushing the upper part of his body. He died at the scene.



Incident scene showing the location of the chaser (“X”) when two logs choked together moved and crushed him.

Safety Requirements

- Logs must be stable and secure before being approached by employees and before chokers are unhooked.
See [WAC 296-54-577\(10\)](https://www.wa.gov/legislative/rulemaking/wac-296-54-577-10).

Recommended Safe Practices

- Do not move in to unhook chokers until you have made eye contact with the yarder engineer and the engineer gives clear instructions that it is safe to do so.
- Never put yourself between two logs that are choked together.
- If a turn is unstable, stay in the clear and signal a machine operator to reposition the unstable log(s).
- When working on shorter landings, keep all ends of the choked logs as even as possible to assist in landing turns better.
- Address short landing issues in pre-job safety meetings. Make sure rigging and landing crews are in communication with each other when there is something out of the ordinary with specific turns.

For example: If there are already problems landing turns on a “short” landing, a long-end bonus with two short-end singles would be something you should communicate to the landing crew about before sending the turn.

