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Safety Alert
N°10 2000

MACHINE ROLL OVER



Details

On the 30th August 1999, a TIMBCO T445-B feller buncher was in the process of felling eucalypt trees. The machine was equipped with a LOGMATE felling head.

During the felling of an eucalypt tree the TIMBCO feller buncher was rolled over by the mass of the falling tree.

The operator did not release the falling tree from the jaws of the felling head as he was trying to directionally fall the tree across its natural line of fall.

The operator only received minor injuries as a result of the roll over, as he was wearing the seat belt and a safety helmet.

Contributing Factors

An investigation into this accident revealed that:

- The angle of the slope at the accident site was measured at 6%.
- The overall length of the tree was 20 metres.
- The diameter of the tree stump was 60 centimetres.
- The tree was leaning in a downhill direction.
- The operator attempted to directionally fall the tree across the slope.
- Following the accident, the felled tree was still located in the felling head.

Recommendations

Employers

Where practicable a felling head emergency release control should be located inside the operator's cabin on all mobile tree felling machines. The emergency release control is to be located in a manner that will permit the operator to quickly release the felling head locking mechanism, permitting unrestricted rotation of the felling head to prevent the machine overturning.

The operator's cabin on feller bunchers, excavators, log skidders, etc., are generally fairly narrow and operators can easily strike their head on the inside of the cabin during normal use.

Therefore, employers must take appropriate action to ensure machine operators:

- Wear the supplied seat belts at all times.
- Wear safety helmets when operating mobile plant.
- Operate the machine according to the manufacturer's operator's manual, and any other instructions and training given by the employer.

Machine Operators

The risk of machine roll over is significantly higher when falling a tree away from the tree's natural line of fall.

- Where practicable, trees should be felled in line with their natural lean.
- Where directional felling is being carried out operators must ensure the safe working capacity of the machine is not exceeded.
- Machine operators must wear the supplied seatbelts at all times.
- Machine operators must wear safety helmets when operating mobile plant.

This is the second roll over investigated where the wearing of a seatbelt and safety helmet has prevented the operator from being more severely injured.

If you would like further information contact Workplace Standards Tasmania on:

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