

FATALGRAM

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: June 17, 2006

Wood Products Industry

A tree cutter and co-worker (victim) were attempting to pull over a notched and back-cut tree. As the tree fell, the co-worker was unable to get out of the way of the falling tree and was struck.

Description of Accident: A tree cutter and coworker were felling trees on a residential lot. The trees were leaning towards the property owner's home. The cutter attached ropes about forty feet up the trees. The co-worker was to tend the rope while the cutter completed the notches and back-cuts. The workers felled several trees using this method.

During the back-cut of a cottonwood tree, the chainsaw became lodged in the tree. The cutter climbed down to help the co-worker pull the tree down. The area that the workers were in was cluttered with previously felled trees. As the cottonwood came down, the cutter was able to move out of the way. The co-worker was not able to get away and was struck.

The cutter heard the victim call out for help. The victim began having trouble breathing and then stopped breathing. CPR was administered but was not successful in reviving the victim.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure a plan of escape while felling trees.
- Ensure a safe distance (approximately 1 ½ times the length of the tree).
- Keep the work area free of debris and obstructions.
- An employer should have a written safety program which includes enforcement and discipline procedures to ensure that employees follow the employer's safety requirements. The employer should take steps to discover employee violations and document disciplinary action taken.