

# FATALGRAM

## ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: May 23, 2009

Logging

*On May 23, 2009 an employee was fatally injured in a logging accident on Dall Island in Southeast Alaska. The victim was struck in the neck by a 7/16" diameter wire cable block strap during tower erecting operations for a Madill Yarder.*

### **Description of Incident:**

The victim was a journeyman logger with twenty years of logging experience. He was standing beside an anchor stump while the yarder was dragging a 1 ¼ inch diameter guy cable to the stump using a 7/16 inch diameter "strawline" cable. The victim was killed instantly when the wire strap snapped and struck the victim's neck and upper torso.

This operation involved moving the yarder to a new landing site and erecting the tower by placing and attaching cable guylines onto anchor stumps. The yarder would then pull cut logs to the landing area for transport. The victim had placed the 7/16 inch diameter wire cable strap around the anchor stump and signaled the Yarder Operator to start tightening the cable. After the cable became taut, the operator started to release some tension on the cable, but it broke and struck the victim before the operator was able to adjust the tension.

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health (AKOSH) investigated the accident. The Safety Compliance Inspector determined that the victim was standing next to the anchor stump when the accident happened. Alaska Administrative Code 8AAC 61.1060 (n) prohibits employees from standing near any cable or line while it is being pulled. In addition, Alaska Administrative Code 8AAC 61.1060(m) requires that great care will be used to ensure excessive tension is not placed on the line when cables are used to raise and lower loads. The investigation also revealed that the yarder did not have the operations manual on the machine at the time of the accident in accordance with federal regulations adopted by AKOSH.

Had the victim not been standing in close proximity to the anchor stump and cable strap while the yarder pulled the guyline cable, this fatal injury may have been prevented. The amount of tension on the wire cable strap was also a significant factor along with not ensuring that the yarder's operation manual was kept in the vehicle for operator review.

### **ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Ensure that employees are properly trained to recognize hazards associated with yarder tower erection.
- Ensure that yarder operation manual recommendations and instructions are followed during equipment operations.

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- Ensure that all employees are trained to recognize safe distances from the anchor stump's wire strap during guyline placement operations and to always stand outside that hazardous area.
- 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.