

FATALGRAM 12-02

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Division of Labor and Safety Standards
Occupational Safety and Health



Date of incident: August 11, 2012

Industry: Logging

Location: Banding Area of Sorting Yard – Nutkwa Lagoon on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska

Summary: On August 11, 2012, an employee was struck and crushed by a log which fell from a bunk while preparing to band the logs together.

Description of Accident: The victim was a third season worker in the sort yard. The employee had been tasked with banding sorted logs that had been placed into a steel bunk. Another employee, operating a front end loader, placed the bundle of logs into the bunk, and then placed the equipment into reverse. While the equipment was backing away from the bunk, the victim moved in to grab a banding wire to begin the banding process. Then a log became displaced, slid and rolled off of the bunk, striking the victim in the back and coming to rest on the victim's head.

Although the equipment operator was working in close proximity to the victim, no one witnessed the accident. The injuries resulting from being struck by the log were immediately fatal.

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health along with the Alaska Department of Public Safety investigated the accident. Based on the investigation, the victim was fatally injured when the log fell from the bunk striking the employee's back and coming to rest on the victim. This indicates that both the operator and victim did not see the log and failed to recognize the log was not safely cradled in the steel bunk. The employer has the responsibility to ensure logging workers, especially those who have not met a journeyman level status, are fully trained in the specific hazards associated with the work they are performing and to recognize those hazards and the preventative measures to be taken to avoid exposure and injury. This accident underscores the requirement for training on specific job tasks.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Ensure that all employees are adequately trained and supervised for each assigned job. The training should include all possible hazardous scenarios related to the employees specific work tasks and measures to prevent or control hazardous exposures to log bundles.
- Ensure that each employee has been trained to recognize and avoid unsafe conditions with regard to log stacking, bundles and the banding process.
- Develop a safety and health program consisting of management commitment and employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training.