

Case 29. 43-year old male logger died after being crushed by a falling tree.

A 43-year-old part-time logger with 25 years of logging experience was crushed by a falling tree while felling the tree with a chain saw. At the time of the accident, the victim was felling a Balmaglion tree, 18 inches in diameter and greater than 30 feet in height. He was wearing a hard hat with a face screen while performing the task. The victim cut through the hinge wood and the tree did not fall away from, but toward the victim crushing his chest and pinning him between the falling tree and a second tree on the ground. There were no witnesses to the incident. Multiple factors may have contributed to his death. First, the back cut through the trunk cut through most of the hinge wood. Second, the wind was blowing in the opposite direction than the direction the victim was planning to fell the tree. Third, the victim had no clear escape path and his path was partially blocked by fallen logs and brush.

MIOSHA issued the following serious citations to the employer:

Serious:

1. Employer did not ensure that employee was working in a position or location that is within visual or audible contact of another employee. (Logging, Part 51, Rule 5117(5))
2. The employer did not ensure that employees checked the area for the path of retreat before felling a tree. (Logging, Part 51, Rule 5152(2))
3. There was improper back cut; all hinge wood was cut. (Logging, Part 51, Rule 5156(2))