

Case 164. 23-year-old logger died when he was crushed between a tree shear and a front-end loader frame.

A 23-year-old male logger died when he was crushed between a tree shear and a front-end loader frame. The logging company was contracted to clear cut trees at the incident site. The company owner noted a hydraulic leak in his John Deere Model 544 B articulated front-end loader equipped with an 18-inch Mobark tree shear. The owner and Employee A propped up the tree shear with a log that was six inches in diameter and approximately seven and one-half feet long to get a better look at the leaking hydraulic line. The hydraulic joint that controls the tilt of the shear in front of the tractor was leaking badly at the time of the incident. This leak was not the leak being repaired. The employee was crushed when the log used to support the shear was dislodged. The owner took off the defective part and drove it back to the shop to conduct repairs and then went back to the incident site. The decedent was using a chain saw at a log pile located on the passenger side of the 544B tractor approximately 15 feet away. The owner was working on the 544B tractor between the driver's side tires. When the owner heard the decedent's chain saw stop, he called out to the decedent to come and help him. It appears that the decedent put down his chain saw and walked around the front of the tractor and under the tree shear. The log supporting the shear somehow became dislodged, and the shear fell, crushing the decedent between the tree shear and the tractor frame. Upon hearing a noise, the owner walked to the front of the tractor and found the decedent. The owner drove the work vehicle one-quarter of a mile to Employee A's location. Employee A was filling holes in the logging road with another front-end loader. The owner drove the front-end loader to the incident site and Employee A drove the work vehicle. The owner used the front-end loader to lift the shear from the decedent. After raising the shear and moving the decedent, the owner began CPR and Employee A drove the work vehicle to another location to get a signal on his cell phone to call for emergency response. Emergency response arrived and the decedent was declared dead at the scene.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations:

SERIOUS: GENERAL PROVISIONS, PART 1, RULE 34(12).

Prohibit employee from placing body beneath equipment such as vehicles, machines, or materials supported by any single supporting means such as a jack, overhead hoist or chain fall, unless safety stands, blocks, or other support system capable of supporting the total imposed weight is used to protect the employee in case of failure or the supporting system.

Employee caught between tree shear supported by log and tractor, 544B John Deere.

SERIOUS: LOGGING, PART 51, RULE 5112(b).

Ensure that the employer instructs the employee in the safeguards and hazards of the assigned job.

Inadequate training on logging operation and equipment.