

LOGGING/FORESTRY SAFETY SERIES

INCIDENT RESPONSE & RESCUE

Photo credit: Cornelis F. de Hoop, PhD

Incident Summary:

At approximately 11:30 a.m. on May 16th, Henry, a tree feller, was trapped by a tree that had fallen against another tree and had suddenly become dislodged. Henry yelled for help for almost 10 minutes before another worker came to see why Henry's machine had stopped running. The worker called 911, but he struggled to describe the location of the incident. He also had a hard time communicating how to get to the site via logging roads. It took emergency responders 90 minutes to find the crew.

The logging crew was instrumental during the response effort. Under the guidance of emergency personnel, a member of the crew removed the log from Henry using a feller-buncher. Due to Henry's distance from the road and the severity of his injuries, a rescue helicopter was called. The logging crew went to work clearing a 100 x 100 landing zone, as instructed by the emergency responders. Almost 2.5 hours after the incident, Henry was loaded into the helicopter and transported to the closest major hospital. His lower body was completely crushed and he suffered multiple internal injuries. Doctors could not stop the internal bleeding and Henry died later that night.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the logging crew aid in response and rescue?
2. What factors delayed response? How could the response have been better?
3. What are the consequences of a delayed response?



Take Home Message:

Three main issues for logger response and rescue:

1. Location: Know your GPS coordinates and be able to tell emergency responders how to find the work site.
2. Communication: Be able to describe the victim's injuries, road conditions, terrain and other hazards. This will allow emergency responders to better prepare for rescue. For example, if they know the terrain is bad, they may call for a helicopter crew earlier.
3. Leadership: Logging sites can be hazardous. The logging boss on site, rather than the first responders, should maintain leadership during response and rescue.

