Company Owner Hit by Falling Tree

The owner of a lumber company was struck and fatally injured by a falling tree just minutes after arriving at work.

The accident occurred in the forest where a worker was using a chainsaw to fell a large tree. The tree did not fall immediately and it was while the faller was requesting assistance from the skidder operator that the tree fell and hit a snag that broke off and hit the owner, who was not wearing a hardhat.

No phone was on site so the company's other owner was forced to drive to a store nearby to call 911. His partner was later airlifted to hospital where he was pronounced dead.

This preventable tragedy illustrates how important it is to implement and follow safe work policies and procedures. In this case, the employer took immediate steps to prevent similar tragedies. The company introduced new safety policies, procedures and training; upgraded its first aid supplies; and purchased cellular phones which are now available on site during all logging operations.

Investigators found the company and its workers made several errors. They recommended:

- Snagged trees be removed before cutting begins
- Fallers use wedges to fell trees
- No partially cut trees be left standing
- Workers stay outside the falling area while cutting is under way
- Workers within the falling area wear hardhats

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