BC **Forest Safety** Council

Mechanical Harvesting

Safety Alert Type:
Mechanical Harvesting

Location: Southern Interior

Date of Incident: 2008-04-01
Company Name: Reitmeier Logging Ltd

Details of Incident:

An excavator operator was attempting to jump start a skidder with the excavator he was operating. The operator attached the jumper cables to the excavator and skidder batteries while the excavator was running, and then walked away from the skidder to allow the batteries to charge up before attempting to start the skidder.

As the operator was waiting for the batteries to charge up, both skidder batteries exploded. No one was injured from the explosion.

The operator reported the incident / close call to his supervisor. The supervisor then told the operator that the electrical system for the John Deere skidder was 12 volts, and the electrical system for the Hyundai excavator was 24 volts – a combination that does not match if attempting to jump start the skidder.

The operator thought that because the two 12 volt batteries in the skidder were connected in series (the batteries were in fact connected in parallel), the skidder could be jumped with 24 volts.

Recommended Preventative Actions:

Batteries of different voltages should never be used for the purpose of jump starting, especially using batteries of higher voltages to jump start vehicles / equipment / machinery outfitted with batteries / electrical systems of lower voltages (ie: using 24 volt batteries to jump vehicles / equipment / machinery outfitted with 12 volt batteries / electrical systems)

Review Safe Work Practice – Batteries with all employees. The Safe Work Practice should cover battery safety, charging, changing, and jump starting topics.

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