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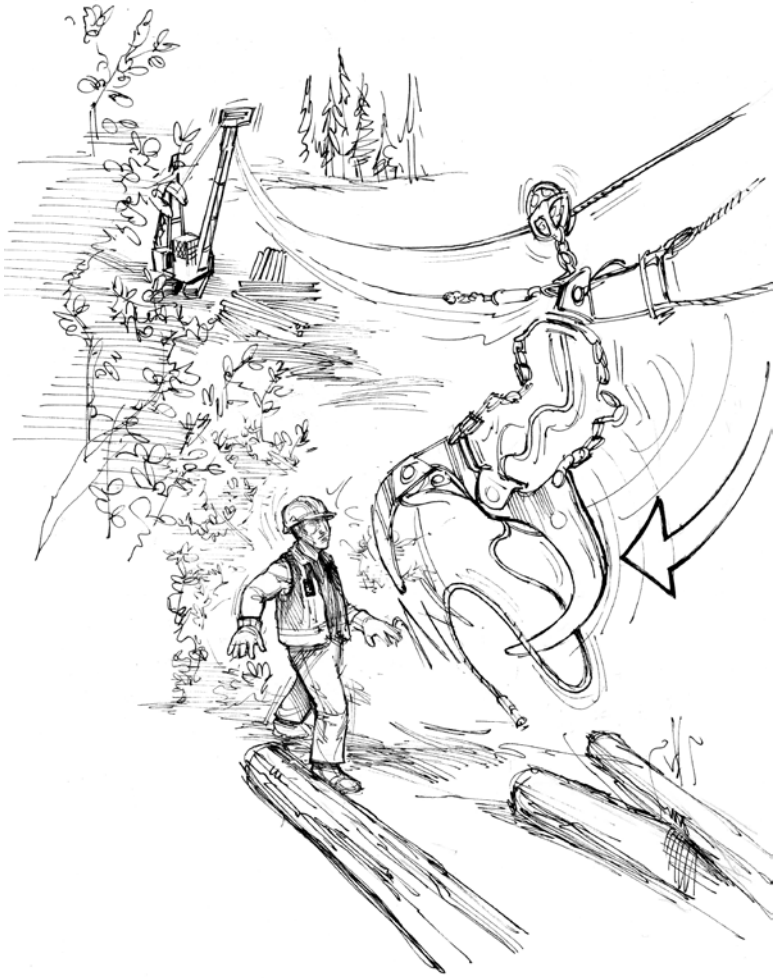
HAZARD ALERT

Spotter hit by grapple when working in blind conditions

A grapple yarder operator was removing logs from a hillside. A new worker was the spotter, directing the placement of the grapple by radio. Two logs were yarded after the spotter attached a choker cable. The spotter then attempted to remove a log from within a retention patch of brush and saplings. The operator could not see the log or the spotter. The spotter had no training or experience working with grapples in blind conditions.

When the spotter asked the operator to swing the grapple, the operator made one blind throw without confirming the spotter's position. When the spotter asked for the grapple to be moved a bit more, the operator immediately did so. However, the spotter was not in the clear. He was hit by the grapple or choker cable and died of his injuries.



Safe work practices:

- Never move the grapple in blind conditions without confirming that the spotter is in a safe position.
- Make sure you are in the clear before giving the go-ahead signal.
- Develop safe work procedures for moving the grapple in blind conditions.
- Train all workers in the required communication procedures.
- Provide new workers with adequate instruction on how to keep themselves in safe positions when they are working around yarding equipment.
- Demonstrate the work task or process for new workers so that they are aware of hazards and can perform the work safely.

Industry: Forestry

WorkSafeBC has a wide range of health and safety information. For assistance and information on workplace health and safety, call toll-free within B.C. 1 888 621-SAFE (7233) or visit our web site at WorkSafeBC.com.

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