



6.1 Quad Unloading Upset - Backgrounder

Date of Occurrence: Thursday, June 30, 2022 **Time of incident:** 1:30 pm

Note: the following incident description was based on an initial interview conducted with the injured worker following the incident. Additional information may be available through further investigation.

Gabriel, an experienced supervisor for Forest Tree Contracting (e.g. logging, silviculture, etc.) needed to “scout” some upcoming blocks for the crew. About 15 kms west from the current blocks where the crew was working, a short spur road to the north terminated on a landing where an older deactivated road then led directly to a group of new blocks that were located about 1 km further west.

The other option for accessing the new blocks was to drive 10 kms south from the current worksite to the main resource road (dubbed the “Highway to Hell” by the crew); then drive west for 20 kms before turning north onto another access road that led directly to the new blocks. This, however, would have added another 40 clicks of rough driving to Gabriel’s day.

After looking at the area map, Gabriel had decided the quad access “shortcut” would be better than taking the long way around. With the quad, Gabriel would save time and energy riding instead of walking. The quad might also be better to scare off any potential bears in the area.

Gabriel’s week had been busy as there had been a new hire that needed orientation and training, even as the crew needed supervision while finishing up that area. The crew had also lost some time on Tuesday when a sudden wind event had knocked down a few trees on the block. Everyone was looking forward to getting a head start on the long weekend, but it was vital for Gabriel to check out the upcoming blocks to be ready for part of the crew to start moving in after the break. Gabriel was also looking forward to a few days off to catch up on paperwork. The visit to the new blocks would also allow Gabriel to hopefully identify any new hazards to talk about at the crew pre-work meeting on Monday.

Gabriel had gone to the shop early Thursday morning and loaded the quad onto the company Ford F350 4x4 pickup in anticipation of accessing the blocks, but it was about 1:00pm that afternoon before Gabriel finally got freed up to drive to the landing where the quad could be unloaded. With the short drive and maybe a couple of hours scouting the new block, Gabriel hoped to get back to the crew no later than 4:00pm so everyone could head to town together. Gabriel let one of the crew know the plan and drove out alone to find the new blocks.

There was a dry box in the back of the Gabriel’s short box pickup that allowed the front tires of the quad to ride up in order to





fit the ATV into the 6.75' truck box for transport. The quad was usually moved by trailer or on a larger truck with a flat deck, but Gabriel had transported quads this way for years and, as a supervisor, found it quicker and more convenient than using a trailer or a larger truck.

Loading and unloading the quad was usually pretty straightforward: secure the ramps in place and run the quad up or down the ramps. Gabriel did the usual routine - including putting a helmet on - before climbing up onto the quad, starting it, and putting it into reverse. As the quad started coming down off the dry box, a loose piece of wood flipped up under right footrest and Gabriel reached down to move it out of the way. While still bent over, and holding onto the left brake lever, the back of the quad rolled off the tailgate and onto the quad ramps. Gabriel squeezed the left brake lever harder to try to slow the quad as it was coming down, but later said that it didn't seem to do much.

At the same moment that Gabriel was grabbing the piece of wood caught under the footrest, the right side of the quad fell off the side of the quad ramp. As the quad hit the ground, it pivoted and rolled over onto Gabriel's lower body. Gabriel tried to break the fall and get out of the way, but the quad landed in such a way that it pinned Gabriel to the ground. Gabriel experienced incredible pain and there was no way to lift the weight of the quad off their lower body, especially with an arm that seemed to be broken. The smell of leaking fuel only added to the frustration and panic Gabriel was feeling. Gabriel had a hand-held radio in their vest but was unable to get a response to several desperate calls for help.

After laying under the quad in excruciating pain for almost three hours, Gabriel finally heard one of the crew pickups roll up. A few crew members quickly rushed over and pulled the quad off of Gabriel. Evie, one of the crew who was a Level 3 First Aid Attendant, started assessing Gabriel for injuries while the driver called on the truck radio for the ETV to come up the road to help them. Within another 30 minutes, Gabriel was strapped to a stretcher for transport to town, about a 45 minute drive. Evie made the decision to use the ETV for transport and would ride along to provide any additional attention needed.

At the emergency clinic, it was determined that Gabriel had a broken right wrist that would require a cast and a badly sprained right ankle that would need a walking boot. Gabriel was released from hospital after treatment but would end up missing 3 weeks of work.

