

working for the same reasons that need

Some landowners want to do their own logging because they prefer a hands-on approach to utilizing their forests. As it is increasingly difficult for landowners to find or afford good loggers to do jobs - especially those with little immediate economic return, such as thinning poor quality trees

Unfortunately, people who are not full-time loggers or forestry contractors have had little, if any training related to logging safely. Felling a tree, bucking it into a log, skidding it to a landing, then loading it onto a truck and hauling it to a mill is not as straightforward as it appears. Unfortunately, the reality is that logging is one of the most dangerous activities in the world. Life and limb-threatening accidents lurk at every corner. In a recent year, the Idaho Industrial Commission recorded approximately 150 deaths and injuries from logging accidents. The agent was a log, tree, or part of a tree or a device used to cut a tree such as a chainsaw or axe. Injuries ranged from lacerations and broken limbs to death (eight people died in Idaho logging accidents that year). Many of the professional loggers in these accidents had years of experience and attended annual safety and first aid training. Here are a few of the tips of questions you should be asking yourself to avoid accidents when cutting or moving trees on your property.

hat, eye protection, and appropriate clothing

- *Safety devices.* Are you using safety devices on your equipment (e.g., roll-bars and skidding)?
- *First aid.* How long has your first aid kit been checked?
- *Equipment.* Are all tools available and using the right equipment properly (sharp, clean, and properly maintained)?
- *Fire.* Are your fire extinguishers working? What is your spark arrestor maintenance to fight fires?
- *Communication.* How do you communicate in the woods? Do you have a contact someone (e.g., a cell phone)? If you do, discuss safety protocols and established communication for the job with the other person.
- *Skills.* It is important to know how to fell a tree safely on a 50% slope. If you are not confident, consider hiring a professional beyond your own skills.

---

There are many sources for more information on this topic. One place to start is the literature that came with the equipment you are using to do the work. If you no longer have that literature, check with a local store that sells the same or similar products. Some manufacturers even provide instructional videos and pamphlets to help people use their equipment safely.

Another invaluable source of information is the Idaho Logging Safety Bureau. This state agency periodically visits Idaho logging operations and provides loggers with on-site and indoor first aid and safety training. To receive their quarterly newsletter that chronicles Idaho logging accidents and provides helpful advice on logging safety, contact: Idaho Logging Safety News,

Logging Safety Bureau, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0048.

Whenever forest owners do their own woods work, safety is a major concern. In recent Extension field programs on small-scale logging technology and thinning and pruning, we are including a stronger safety component.

---

This information first appeared in Woodland NOTES, Vol. 10, No. 1.

**About the Author:** *Chris Schnepf* is an Area Extension Educator - Forestry and Professor at the University of Idaho.

