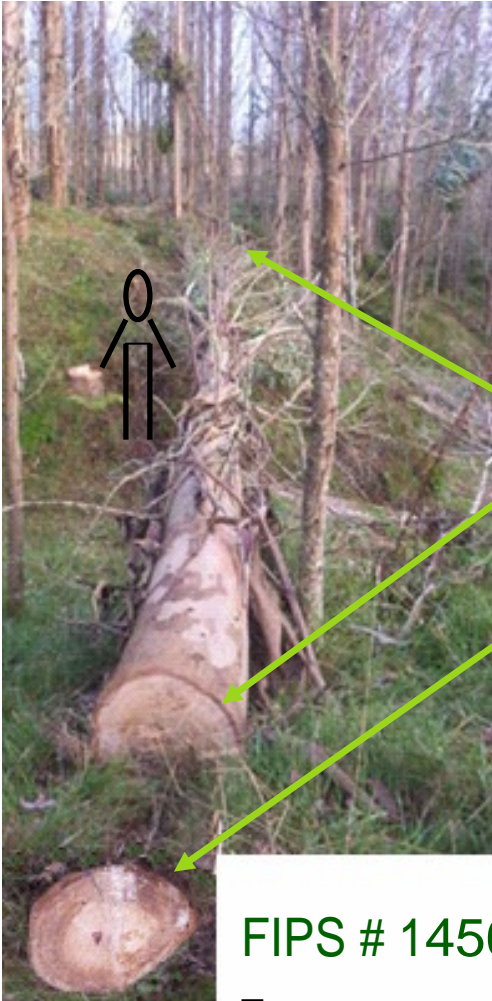


Tree Felling – Serious Harm!



Important factors relevant to incident 1456:

Please note the very high degree of variability in the stand – The tree pictured, the one that caused the injury, measures approximately 18m long and 35 cm in diameter at the stump.

A front cut was used but very little, if any, scarf. This caused the tree to fall at 90 degrees to the intended direction.

The fall of the tree would have been slowed by surrounding standing trees – this probably saved the victim from more serious harm!

Inspection of the wider area showed evidence of very poor felling technique – trees over 20cm felled without scarfs, chasing trees of the stump, and over-cuts. Whilst quite obvious – nobody said anything about it!

Letters of ‘Prior Warning’ have been issued (by the DoL) to both fallers and to the Contractor.

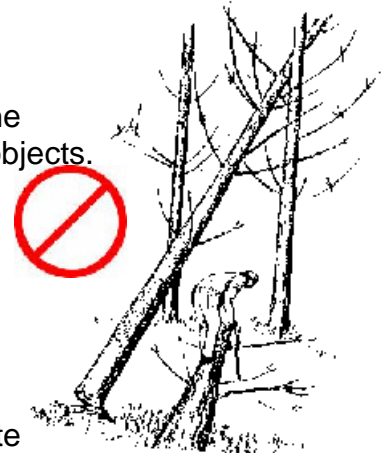
FIPS # 1456 – Lost Time Injury

Two men were buddy felling on rolling terrain, the older (fully trained and experienced) man was supervising. The more experienced of the two said that he would move to another location and turned his back on the less experienced Faller as he was felling a tree. Because of improper felling cuts the tree broke off the stump and headed sideways – towards the man who was walking away. A large branch, struck the more experienced man on the right shoulder and knocked him to the ground.

Pre-felling Assessment

Take the time to assess any hazards and the tree – many injuries occur because the tree does not fall in the way the faller expects, or because they are hit unexpectedly by falling objects.

- ❖ Slope – are the trees leaning downhill
- ❖ Weather – wind direction, heavy rain
- ❖ Proximity to power lines, roads, machinery
- ❖ Look for sailers above or in nearby trees
- ❖ Look for branches or vines interlocked with other trees
- ❖ Determine the predominant and side lean
- ❖ Plan your movements around the tree and your escape route
- ❖ Clear any obstructions, like pongas, so you can see the top of the tree
- ❖ Assess the crown weight and where the heaviest branches are, to determine the potential fall direction
- ❖ Plan the felling cuts, remember there are rules governing tree felling – (see the [Approved Code of Practice for Forestry Operations](#) pages 82 – 88).



FIPS# 1421 – Lost Time Injury

A tree Faller was working along the side of a small spur. A large boulder was positioned at the base of the spur and to the left of the tree being felled. Once the tree started to fall he moved to his escape route which meant stepping up on to the spur. He slipped and fell back against the boulder. At the same time the falling tree dislodged an old piece of decaying beech log, throwing it back on to him.

Felling Supervision

- ❖ Regularly check the distances between workers to ensure no-one is within the minimum two tree lengths
- ❖ Consider increased risks from extreme or changing weather conditions
- ❖ Encourage safe work practices, including drinking and eating appropriately
- ❖ Ensure equipment and PPE is adequate, regularly checked and well maintained
- ❖ Identify 'poor practice' and nip it in the bud!

