

9th March 2016

SAFETY ALERT



Breaker Out Seriously Injured

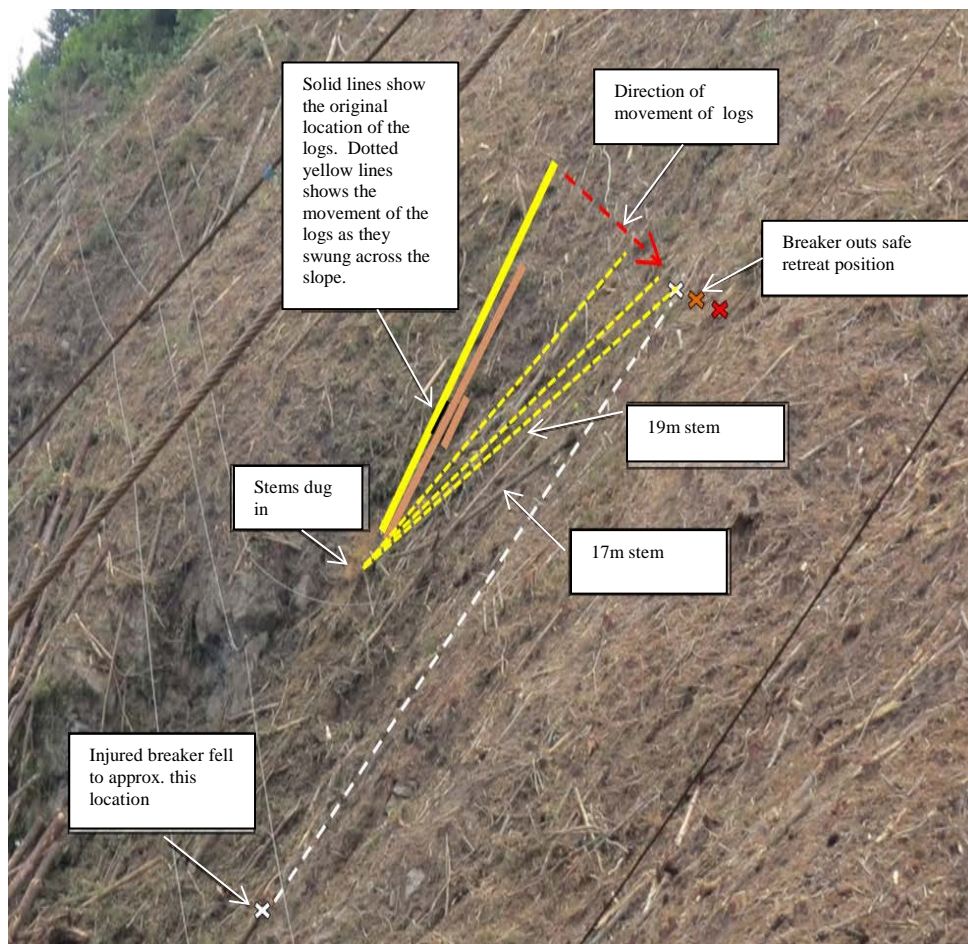
Background:

In February a breaker out was seriously injured in our Hancock Central Region operations. Three breaker outs were hooking up short logs on a steep slope (approx. 45°). All three breaker outs were experienced and fully qualified as head breaker outs. Their agreed breaking out plan for the day specified that they retreat back 20m at a 45° angle uphill and behind the drag. The breaking out plan also specified use of their GPS monitoring system (Logsafe) as the means of confirming they were achieving the safe retreat.

On the morning of the incident the extraction team (breaker outs and hauler driver) went to work in the full knowledge that they had not reset their Logsafe monitoring system, so it was ineffective. They also did not take the back up system to Logsafe, of using a range-finder. As a result the breaker outs had no means to check exactly how far back they had retreated.

On the 9th drag of the day the breaker outs hooked up a drag of what they believed was four short logs. Part of the drag was obscured by slash making it difficult to see the full length of the logs. The logs were also 'gut hooked'. The breaker outs retreated to where they believed was a safe location. It was later confirmed that it was only 16-18m from where they hooked up, and not sufficiently uphill or behind the drag as specified.

On the inhaul the downhill end of the longer logs dug into the slope causing the top end of the logs to sweep in an arc across the slope. The closest of the breaker outs was struck by one of the logs and rolled approximately 40m downslope. He suffered serious head injuries, and multiple abrasions and bruising. Thankfully he is now home to recuperate after nearly a month in hospital but he was extremely lucky not to be permanently injured or even killed.



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Principle Causes

The incident investigation found the key contributing causes were:

- Failure to follow the safe retreat plan that had been agreed for the day
- Failure to use the key pieces of equipment necessary to confirm the safe retreat had been achieved (either the Logsafe GPS system or alternatively a range finder and flags)
- Failure to identify the hazards in the drag:
 - logs covered in slash
 - a gut hooked drag
 - low deflection causing the ropes to be low to the ground increasing the risk of them digging in
 - All should have been recognized as hazards requiring a greater safe retreat

What do you need to do

All workers:

- No matter what your job is, always follow the rules and use the equipment provided to keep you safe.
- Never think that you know better or 'it is not going to happen to me'.

Manual Breakers Outs:

- Make sure you understand your breaking out plans – including both your daily safe retreat plan, and all aspects of the overall breaking out procedures. If something is not clear ask!
- Carefully assess each drag. If there are any conditions that could cause the drag to move in an unexpected way, take that into account and increase your safe retreat to ensure your safety.

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