

Pan Pac Forests Safety Alert #10

Date: 13 November 2023

Focus Group: All

Topic: Wind & Weather

Issued By: Health & Safety - Andrea

Incident:

On 27th October 2023 trees were wind affected and fell over a parked ute, narrowly missing a crew cabin and the worker that was in there to grab some gear.



The cabin and original parking area were not located on the skid, but over the road. The skid did not have sufficient room for parking or the cabin, alongside landing operations.

The team had identified the tree fall/wind gust hazard on the day and moved the vehicle parking area to another location.

The hazard to the cabin location remained otherwise uncontrolled.

There have been more than 5 property damages as a result of fallen/falling trees since June.

Outcomes:

- Ute was written off.
- People were unharmed but this was a matter of 'good fortune'.
- Post Incident Assessment – the worksite was one that involved steep, roadside harvesting, at a switch back and little suitable area available to build a safe area off the skid.
- The recommendation is that this is not a suitable replanting and harvest area.

Risk Awareness & Impact:

- Wind is a significant risk in the forest, particularly in gullies, ridgetops and newly exposed tree faces.
- Wind gusts are more frequent and of significant intensity, as the seasons change and El Nina/El Nino weather patterns change.
- This impacts all Pan Pac workers and contractors travelling, working or parking within the fall zone of trees (mature or not).

Safe Work Practises:

- **Wind** – where tree movement, broken branches etc.. indicate high wind conditions, implement the adverse weather/wind closure process.
- **Trees** – where possible, do not park or locate places of safety, within the fall zone of trees or other significant falling objects.
- **Skid Plan/Off Skid Plan** – must be maintained throughout the harvest activity. As the site changes, reassess your options for smoko/rest area, parking, equipment maintenance and fuel storage, as detailed in the ACoP.
- **Work Area Handover** – check your build/plan against the ACoP requirements. All people have the right to first refuse unsafe work and then contribute to what controls are acceptable and will work. Take your harvest plan into account. Harvesting co-ordinators have a practical check listing that can be used as a guide.
- **Controlling Hazards** - Crews may be able to do this themselves but may also need to seek help. This may include:
 - asking for additional felling such as in another harvest unit (as in this case).
 - requesting skid or layout adjustments.
- **Scheduling** – managing felling, around newly exposed trees, is tackled at the time of day where the area experiences less 'gusting'.
- **Feedback** – should always be given (and recorded) on the challenges of the harvest area, skid locations, and harvest plans to ensure that future planting and preparation, take into account the experience of those doing the work.

For Site Manager use (print this document and then complete):

This safety alert is relevant to my site?

Yes or No (circle one)

If yes, complete the following actions:

1. This safety alert has been discussed with employees and operators
2. I have placed this safety alert on the site noticeboard or in the safety file

Site Manager: _____

Date: / /