

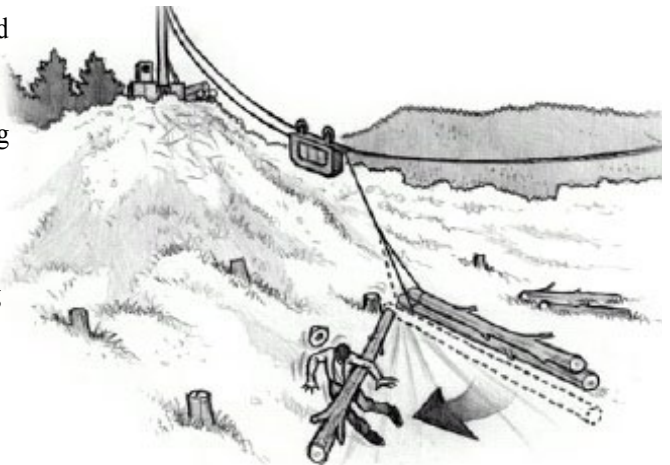


Crowding the Rigging

This year, seven loggers doing cable yarding work have been injured or killed because they were not in the clear, standing too close to the turn and rigging – including lines, chokers, butt rigging, and carriages.

- **January 2011** – A choker setter and a rigging slinger were pre-setting and hot-setting turns of logs. They had set a turn of logs near the cable lines and the rigging slinger retreated to logged-off ground to the south. The choker setter retreated to the north side of the lines, dropping his chokers near logs to be choked and moving further out of the way. The turn hung up and a log upended and struck the choker setter, who had returned to the chokers.
- **January 2011** – A rigging crew was moving a skyline during a road change. As the haulback line pulled the skyline into position, the rigging chain connecting the haulback to the skyline broke. The chain struck the block that the haulback was running through and hung up, causing the block to be pulled into lead with the corner block. This caused the waist line to suddenly and violently move striking a worker standing next to the waist line.
- **February 2011** – Two workers were picking up a road line preparing to change roads. They choked several logs and blew the go-ahead whistle to send the turn to the landing when one of the logs swung around and hit them.
- **June 2011** – A worker was pre-setting chokers on a turn of logs when the rigging slinger blew the go-ahead whistle and the worker was struck by one of the logs in the turn.
- **August 2011** – A rigging slinger and hook tender were setting chokers and had contacted the Yoder to yard logs to the landing. As the choked logs started to move, the longest one started to wing into lead and struck an alder log next to it. The alder log narrowly missed the rigging slinger and struck the hook tender in the head. He died at the scene from massive head trauma.
- **October 2011** – A three-man rigging crew was setting chokers in a thinning unit while working both sides of the lines. The rigging slinger hooked up a turn of logs consisting of two tree lengths and one 10-inch diameter, 35-foot bucked log that was choked about 12 feet from the end. He blew a “go ahead” signal while he was walking away from the turn to clear out. As the turn moved ahead, the 35-foot log hung up on a stump, swung towards him, and struck him in the head and shoulder. He was knocked unconscious and received serious shoulder injuries.

All of the victims were too close to the rigging and not standing in the clear while the work was under way. Oregon OSHA defines *in the clear* as “a position within the work area where the probability of hazardous contact with vehicles, machines, falling trees, moving logs, rootwads, chunks, material, rigging, and equipment is minimized by distance from the hazards or use of physical barriers, such as stumps, trees, terrain, or other objects providing protection.”



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How to prevent accidents caused by crowding the rigging

Plan the work and control hazards. All operations at a logging site must be planned and the supervisor must evaluate and control potential hazards before work begins. Hold pre-work safety meetings to discuss the site's conditions and hazards. Determine which logging method affords the best opportunity for the rigging crew to get in the clear.

Know what "in the clear" means. Before giving the "go-ahead" signal, all rigging crew members must move to an area that is in the clear. The person in charge of the rigging crew must be a competent person and must know where "in the clear" is for any given situation.

You are *not* in the clear unless you are out of the swing radius of the longest log in the turn. This means the length of the log, plus the length of the choker, plus any line deflection that could occur, plus a safety factor (a few extra steps you should always take, just to be sure you're safe).

Don't be complacent! Remember, you're not working in an office. When you work in the woods, you had better have your game on. Be aware of your surroundings and anything the turn could move or roll toward you. The decisions you make affect your life.

Don't take chances! Many loggers have died because they or their supervisors took a chance with their safety. Don't leave to chance something you have the ability to control. If you take chances in the woods, you can lose your life.

Watch out for one another. Your co-workers rely on you for their safety as you rely on them. Bring to their attention any unsafe conditions you see.

Supervisors, heads up! Never forget that the safety of those you supervise is your No. 1 priority. Inexperienced workers rely on you for their survival, and your actions reflect the safety values of the company.

Safe practices

- Stay in the clear of all lines, rigging, and chokers until all movement has stopped. Swinging chokers, hooks, and rigging must be lowered to the ground to stop them from swinging before you approach them.
- Stay alert to the moving turn and be ready to signal "stop" if a hazard develops.
- Make sure that everyone on the rigging crew is able to predict how the lines will move, how logs will move, and what to expect from others.
- Before giving the go-ahead signal, the crew must identify the logs that will move and make sure that they are in the clear of any unbucked or tree-length logs.
- Keep the landing crew informed where the rigging crew members are at all times.
- Face the work and the hazards; stay alert and watch the turn all the way to the landing.
- Never position yourself below anything that could be dislodged when the turn is yarded free.
- Be sure all unstable logs, rootwads, rocks, or other objects that could roll or slide into the work area are removed or stable before work begins.
- Avoid heavy turns, which increase the chance for hang-ups. Reefing and heavy pulling strain the rigging and tower and may result in catastrophic failure.
- The risk of a swinging log increases when logs are choked with long ends. Long ends give a log greater potential to upend or swing violently if it catches a stump or hangs up. Choke short ends when possible.