



# Training notes from the woods & the classroom

December 2010

---

## Safety on Timber Harvesting Sites

If there is a timber harvest on your land, chances are you are going to want to visit the site to check on the progress and watch the machines at work. Before you do, remember that people on the ground are at the greatest risk of injury and even death. To help ensure your personal safety, keep in mind the following guidelines.

- 1) Before entering an active harvest site always notify the logging crew, preferably the supervisor of the harvesting crew. When possible, call the night before and tell someone you are planning a visit to the harvest site.
- 2) When driving or walking into the area where your trees are being harvested, watch closely for haul trucks entering or leaving the site, hazardous road conditions, movement of harvesting equipment, and hanging limbs or trees that may fall unexpectedly. You may be entering on a narrow road with sharp curves, so be aware.
- 3) When you arrive at the area where the harvesting is occurring, be sure to park your vehicle in an area well away from any harvesting equipment or activity.
- 4) Before leaving your vehicle, be sure to wear proper safety apparel, which should include:
  - Orange vest or a brightly colored shirt or jacket (heightened visibility)
  - Safety glasses or goggles (blowing dust or debris)
  - Hard hat (falling limbs and snags)
  - Ear plug or muffs (around operating equipment)

If you do not have access to these items, ask the forester and/or logger that you are working with and he/she may be able to assist you in getting the appropriate safety gear.

- 5) If you wish to walk over the harvesting site, after making the crew foreman aware of your intentions, be cautious of the following conditions:
  - Slip, trip and fall hazards (such as vines, stumps, stump holes, limbs, gullies, etc.)
  - Hanging limbs or trees that may fall unexpectedly
  - Movement of harvesting equipment
- 6) Never approach an operating piece of equipment. Always maintain a distance of at least two tree lengths, usually 120 to 180 feet, from operating equipment. Maintain distance of at least 300 feet from the machine that is cutting down the trees. Any machine used in the harvesting operation could cause a number of objects to be thrown in your direction. These machines could push over standing trees,

dislodge leaning trees or catapult sticks, limbs, tops or even the tree trunk in your direction. Some machines have been known to sling machine parts over great distances.

- 7) If you have a question or problem, talk to the harvesting crew supervisor at a location away from any other harvesting activity.
- 8) Never accept a ride on a piece of harvesting equipment.
- 9) Always be aware of hazardous weather conditions as they may reduce visibility, cause excessive fatigue or offer direct danger.
  - High winds (falling limbs, lodged or dead trees, blowing dust)
  - Heavy rain (getting vehicle stuck or slipping and falling in slick mud)
  - Heavy fog or mist (limited visibility)
  - Lightning (thunderstorms can come up quickly and catch you away from your vehicle)
  - Extreme heat (heat exhaustion)
  - Extreme cold (hypothermia)
  - Snow or ice (slipping and falling)
- 10) Avoid being in the woods alone when possible. If it is necessary to be alone, let someone know where you will be and when you expect to return.
- 11) If you lease your land to a hunting club, it is a good idea to inform them that timber harvesting is going on and the dangers associated with it.
- 12) If you still have questions concerning timber harvest site safety or want information about the proper safety apparel, you may want to contact the forester you are working with. The name and phone numbers of this contact person is provided below:

---

### **Contact Information**

Dave Chura, Executive Director  
Minnesota Logger Education Program  
301 W 1<sup>st</sup> Street; Suite 510  
Duluth, MN 55802  
218-722-5442  
[dchura@mlep.org](mailto:dchura@mlep.org)  
[www.mlep.org](http://www.mlep.org)