

FATALGRAM 11-05

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: January 25, 2011

Industry: Logging

Location: Afognak Island (near Kodiak), Alaska

Summary: An employee was fatally injured when a 2000 pound spool of banding wire slipped off its anchor point and fell, striking the employee who was positioned underneath it. The victim was subsequently asphyxiated.

Description of incident: The incident occurred in a sorting yard where logs are sorted and banded for shipment. A L350F log loader vehicle with claw-like log tine attachments and a five-foot long, 1/4-inch wire sling was used for the sorting and banding of logs as well as transporting and positioning spools of 1/4-inch log bundle banding wire which weigh approximately 2000 pounds. The victim was a ground worker who was working with the machine operator to replace a spool of banding wire which had emptied. The workers were tasked with positioning a replacement spool of banding wire and placing it inside a specially design metal box/cage. A wire sling was looped through the spool and both ends (eyes) were pushed onto the tip of one fork tine.

While the log clamp tines remained open, the spool of banding wire was lifted and transported approximately 20 feet over an unlevelled, bumpy surface. The victim walked alongside the log loader vehicle and gave hand signals to the machine operator as the victim guided the vehicle to the metal wire box/cage which acted as a band dispenser. When the vehicle became stationary, the spool of wire was suspended approximately five feet off the ground. The victim then positioned himself under the suspended load to cut away excess wiring. While the victim was under the suspended load, the wire sling slipped off the end of the tine, causing the spool of wire to fall onto the victim, resulting in fatal injuries. The victim's official cause of death was mechanical asphyxiation.

The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health investigation revealed that the job task was intermittent and not a primary job task for the victim. It was considered a routine job task by the company and as result, there was inadequate job task training, written standard operating procedures and hazard assessment.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Train and periodically remind all workers of the dangers of standing under a suspended load.
- Always conduct a thorough hazard assessment prior to engaging in any high hazard work operations.
- Develop adequate written standard operating procedures which includes employee training for all high hazard and infrequent work operations.