

# Seasonal Changes Pose Risks!

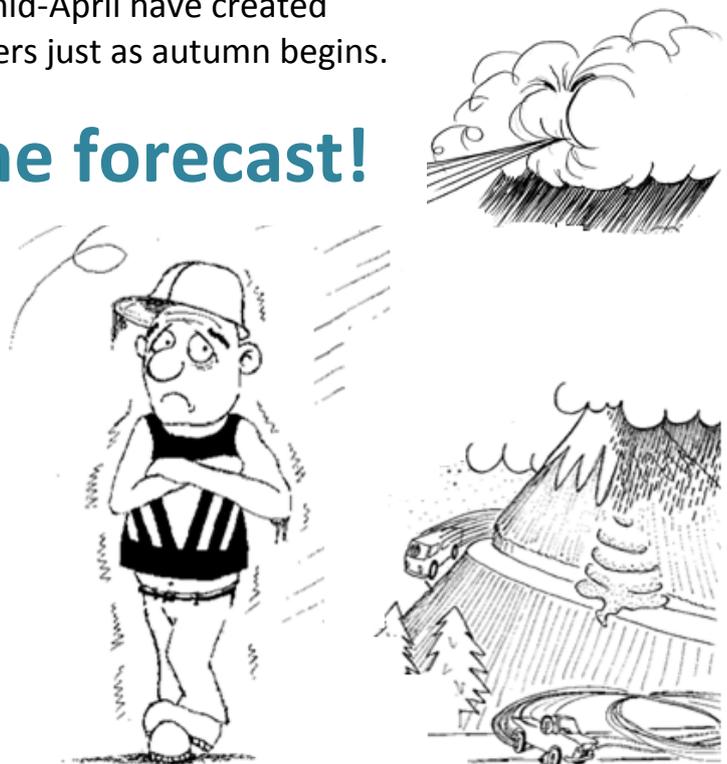
The recent cold snap is a timely reminder for forestry workers that we are heading into a high-risk period for vehicle and machinery-related injuries.

Snow, sleet, rain and the cold during mid-April have created challenging conditions for forest workers just as autumn begins.

## Keep an eye on the forecast!

Although forecasts are for a warmer winter this year, we must still direct our attention to the subject of winter safety!

Indeed, the generally warmer conditions may mean that **our guard is down** for any rapidly deteriorating conditions and cold snaps that may arrive!



**Seasonal and winter reminders:** Roads are slippery; landings are muddy, the hills are wet and cold, the mornings are foggy and dark; and the wind is usually stronger!

**Please be aware of the associated hazards:** Our reporting shows that sprains, strains, slips, falls, black ice, reduced alertness, cold injuries, icy roads, wind chill, colds, flu and other winter illnesses are all factors that merit our consideration.

Seasonal and winter hazards will all be out there waiting to take advantage of anyone who drops their guard. **Make sure it is not you!**

# Absenteeism Survey!

## Absenteeism costs NZ \$1.3 billion...

A [study commissioned by Southern Cross Health and BusinessNZ](#) found that an estimated 6.1 million days of work absences cost the New Zealand economy approximately \$1.3b in 2012.

Studies have also discovered that, on average, six out of ten employers do not believe employees' excuses when they ring in sick. Additionally, many employees have admitted to not having a genuine reason for being absent from work.

Absenteeism and safety in a small-scale workplace can become a vicious cycle. A short-staffed business can be at far greater risk for incidents, leading to injuries and higher levels of absenteeism, thus perpetuating the cycle. In addition, small businesses are susceptible to lost earnings. This can encourage the acceptance of greater risk and risk taking.



## Measuring and Reporting – a Helpful Business Tool!

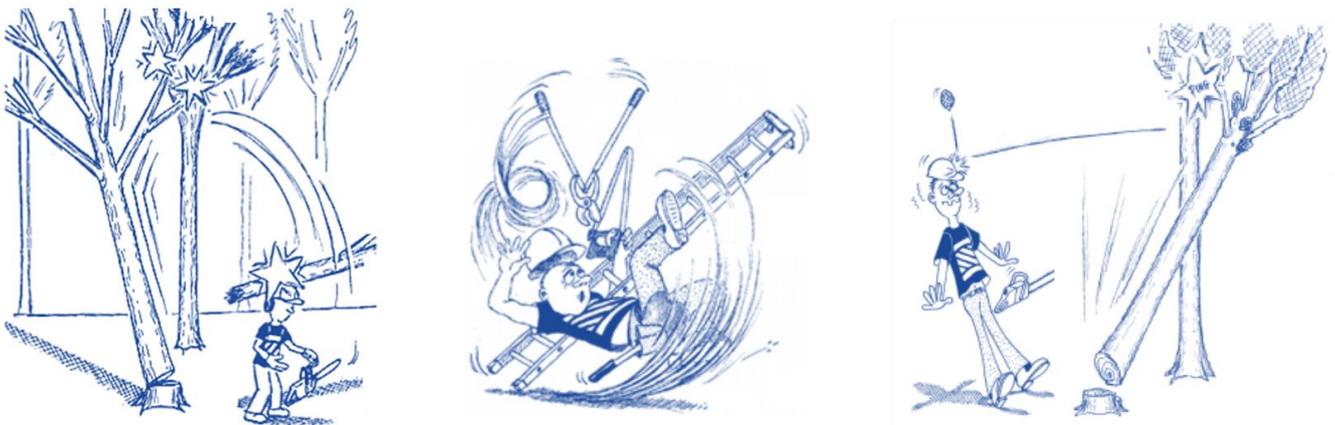
**Phil O'Reilly, BusinessNZ CEO**, says the survey "...is the most comprehensive assessment of where New Zealand stands in terms of the connection between absenteeism, sickness, costs and related practices in the workplace – until now, no one has put the pieces together to see what the picture looks like..."

In view of the above, we (Central Safety Committee) would like to start measuring and benchmarking absenteeism. Understanding absenteeism, the reasons for it, and applying what we learn will likely lead to a safer and more productive workplace for everyone.

## Silviculture – Changes in Work Programme!

Silviculture (growing and tending) workers experience a high degree of ‘change’ as the forestry work programme moves from site preparation, through to planting, releasing, pruning and thinning.

Each new job calls for skilled workers that are fully aware of the tasks’ requirements and hazards. While trees are generally smaller in silviculture, workers face hazards that can and have caused serious harm – **there is no room for complacency!**



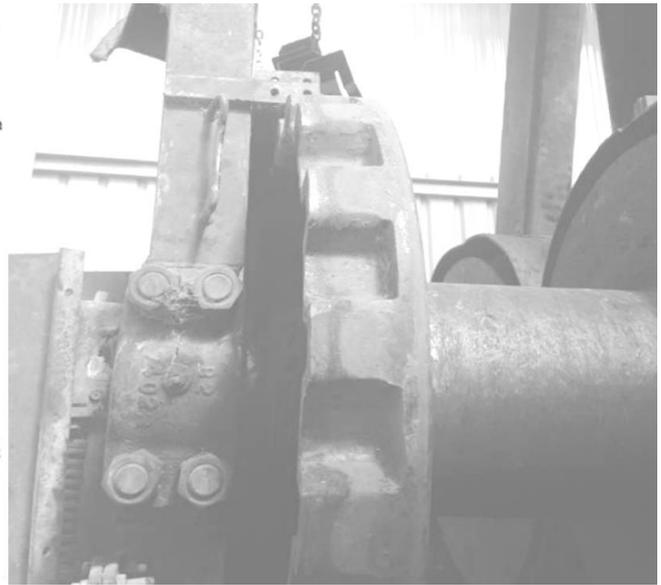
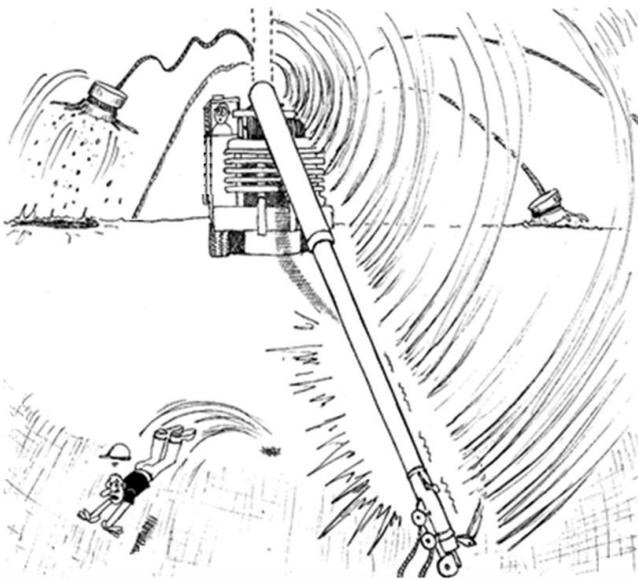
### FIPS 6888 05/03/2015 – Lost Time Injury

High pruning, a pruner unhooked his safety harness to climb down. He then noticed a missed branch, so climbed back up and went to cut it off. He did not reattach the safety harness. Leaning back, he lost balance, fell, and landed on a rock, which resulted in a fracture of his left foot.

## Adjusting to change – the key to success!

This incident noted above did not necessarily identify problems with the contractors’ systems and processes, or worker training issues. A closer look by WorkSafe NZ, did reveal a need for more ‘attention to change’ – more reminders, more observations.

As we move into the planting season, many workers will once again come across ‘well known’ but ‘unfamiliar hazards’ – e.g. driving on wet grassy tracks. Management of these will call for planning, reminders and increased observation!



## Hauler Tower Tip-Over!

### FIPS 6922 26/03/2015 – Property Damage Incident

A drag of logs was making its way up the front face for landing. It appears<sup>1</sup> that a dog (paw) came loose from a shaft causing a rear guy-line to unwind off its drum. This event 'shocked' another rear guy-line, which snapped. The tower lost support and it collapsed forward to the ground. While we notified WorkSafe NZ, no one was injured.

What did the investigation reveal?

- The hauler was properly set-up and had not been overloaded.
- All necessary checks e.g. of the guy-lines, deadmen, stumps and the tension had been completed by the qualified and experienced hauler contractor.
- During the annual tower certification, which occurred for this hauler during October of 2014, the guy-rope pawls were not inspected. A thorough inspection may have enabled these problems to be identified and rectified.

Upon reading this information, hauler owners/operators should immediately check that the annual certification process has included such checks. Any faulty equipment must be replaced and any necessary engineering work completed immediately.

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that sequence of failures was reversed i.e. a rear guy-line (or some part of the set-up) gave way causing the dog to fail under load.