



Zero Fatalities
Zero Lost Time
Zero Road/Speed Incidents
Zero Environmental Incidents
Zero Tolerance of Unsafe Behaviours & Practices



PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 25

Date: 31 January 2020	Focus Group: Forest Workers
Topic: Location Awareness	Issued by: Craig Fisher

Background and Incident: A breaker-out was hooking up a stem on a steep slope near a bluff above a creek. As he did so, he slipped on crumbling soil and fell around 11 metres off the bank. By hanging onto the stop, he managed to slow the momentum of his fall but dropped the last few metres, landing flat on his back at the bottom of the bluff.

Injury Details: Initial diagnosis was of a back sprain and self-treatment with anti-inflammatories. Later, medical treatment revealed the crew member had suffered a fractured vertebra in his lower back. This is a LTI and notifiable (to WorkSafe NZ – Spinal Injury).

Risk Awareness: Loose soils, steep slopes and bluffs are typical hazards found at forest work sites. It is very important that workers maintain ‘situational awareness’ – a helicopter view of such hazards – where they are, the risks they pose to workers and how we must modify our behaviours and practices to suit. Losing situational awareness, even for short periods, can lead to exposure to the hazards and serious harm.

Safe Behaviours: Steep slopes and bluffs with drop-offs require specific attention and careful planning. These hazards should be discussed and noted in tailgate meetings including felling and breaking-out plans. Ideally, hazards found by tree fellers can flow into subsequent tail-gate meetings to benefit, for example, the breaker-outs. Correct PPE (good footwear), site assessment and “watching your mate” (observation with feedback) should all be considered. Production is never more important than doing a job safely. Additionally, sometimes trees may need to be left as being too dangerous to extract.

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 notice board or in the safety file

Site Manager: _____
(signature)

Date: / /