



**Fatal  
Incident  
Involving a  
Log Truck  
and Motor  
Vehicle on  
Mill  
Roadway**

A paper mill employee was fatally injured around 6:00 a.m. when his personal vehicle struck the rear-end of a log truck with protruding logs in dense fog and poor lighting.

The employee leaving work left the parking lot and proceeded on the mill property roadway. At the same time a log truck driver was about to enter the woodyard scale when he realized he did not have orange stripes on his logs – signifying that the logs were safe to be unloaded. The log truck driver turned around and proceeded to the mill road. After entering the mill road, the log truck made a left turn into a truck staging area to paint orange stripes on the logs. As the mill employee’s vehicle struck the protruding logs, one log broke, falling to the ground as another log penetrated through the vehicle’s windshield inflicting fatal injuries. After being struck by the protruding log, the mill employee’s vehicle appears to have accelerated with the one log remaining in the vehicle until it left the road and hit a tree at speed. There were no brake marks at the scene.

The log truck driver, unaware of what had just occurred with the mill employee’s vehicle, continued into the staging area, painted the orange stripes on the logs and then returned to the woodyard to be unloaded. The log truck driver left the mill site again, passing the wreckage and still not aware of what had taken place.



Sample photo of a log truck with protruding ends



Log truck without protruding ends



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This hazard alert is based on an actual incident, and reflects our best understanding of the incident at the time it was written. However, many incidents have multiple causes; this alert may not cover all of them. The purpose of the alert is to illustrate workplace hazards; it is not intended to be a comprehensive report on the incident.

**Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence:**

- The forestry industry needs to develop a system to eliminate protruding log ends by cutting logs equal to the length of the trailer or cutting the logs flush with the end of the trailer.
- Mills need to work with log suppliers to eliminate protruding logs past the end of the trailer. Mills should also let suppliers know they will reject loads that have protruding log ends.
- Develop and/or enforce a traffic law(s) that prohibit protruding logs.
- Develop and/or enforce traffic laws requiring a warning flag on the longest protruding log and strobe or flashing light be present on the longest protruding log in non-daylight hours.
- Separate commercial traffic from personal vehicle traffic on mill roadways.
- Evaluate all roadway lighting on mill property and install temporary lighting and applicable signage along mill roadways.
- Develop an action plan to have permanent lighting and signage installed on all mill roadways.