



Fatality #27 - December 02, 2004
Determined Chargeable December 30, 2004
Machinery - Surface - WV
Catenary Coal Company - Samples Mine

COAL MINE FATALITY - On Thursday, December 2, 2004, a tree cutter with four years of experience was fatally injured while clearing trees in advance of a surface mining operation. The tree cutter cut a tree that had another tree wedged against it. As the tree that was being cut fell, the wedged tree also fell, striking the victim and causing fatal crushing injuries.



Best Practices

- Conduct thorough examinations. Identify and clearly designate any tree deemed unsafe to cut as a "danger tree" so all cutters will know that they are not to be cut (e.g. lodged trees or snags).
- Prior to cutting a tree, conduct a visual examination for possible hazards and clear away any potential obstacles that could interfere with cutting the tree.
- Select the best position from which to cut the tree and determine an escape route to use in case of an emergency.
- Fell or remove each "danger tree" using mechanical or other techniques that minimize miner exposure.
- Fell or remove each "danger tree" before work is commenced in the area.

This is the 27th fatality reported in the coal mining industry in calendar year 2004, and this is the 7th classified as Machinery. As of December 2, 2003, there were 30 fatalities.