



**Fatality #13 – June 3, 2008**  
**Machinery - Open Pit - Kentucky**  
**Premier Elkhorn Coal Company - Job #49**

**COAL MINE FATALITY** - On Tuesday, June 3, 2008, a 33-year old tree cutter (contractor) with 10 years experience was fatally injured while cutting trees in advance of a surface mining operation. The victim had made a notch cut on a 24" diameter tree and was in the process of completing the back cut when the tree slabbed from the stump approximately 16 feet high then fell on the victim. The tree contained a hollow center which promoted the slabbing.



**Best Practices**

- Examine the area around the tree to be cut for hazards from previously felled trees, vines, underbrush, etc.
- Ensure that a clear escape route is present at a 45 degree angle away from the tree.
- Always make an open face (notch) cut in the direction the tree should fall. This cut should be of adequate depth (25% of tree diameter) and the two cut angles should total 90 degrees.
- Use bore cutting whenever possible, leaving a hinge equaling 10% of the tree diameter to guide the fall of the tree and hold it to the stump during the majority of the tree's fall.
- The final cut should be level.
- Chainsaw bar should be of sufficient length to reach through the diameter of the tree.

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> fatality reported in calendar year 2008 in the coal mining industry. As of this date in 2007, there were seven fatalities reported in the coal mining industry. This is the fourth Machinery fatality in 2008. At this time in 2007, there was one fatality in this classification.

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The information provided in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.

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