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# Fatality – Slashing Contractor

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CAGC SAFETY ALERT

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# Safety Alert

09-00

## ***Explanation***

On October 16, 2000, a fatal incident occurred at a Polaris Land Services Ltd. work site. In addition to releasing accurate details of the accident, Polaris wishes to notify their industrial colleagues of the possible ramifications of the resulting investigation.

## ***Sequence of Events***

On October 16, 2000, Rod Greening, an employee of Polaris Land Services Ltd., was fatally injured while working on a job site northwest of Rocky Mountain House. The circumstances of this accident were most unusual.

Due to the activity of beavers in the area, a large poplar had been cut through but had fallen vertically and impaled itself in the ground to a point above the beaver cut. This tree was approximately 10 meters from the hand cut line. From our investigation at the scene, it is apparent that the cut poplar tree was standing upright. It was essentially in a vertical position as viewed from Rod's location at the time of the accident.

There were other standing trees between Rod and the line. From scar marks on these trees, it is apparent that the falling tree struck them and glanced off before striking Rod. This clearly indicates that the poplar was not limb-tied to the tree Rod was cutting. We believe that cutting of the large pine tree caused enough of a disturbance to dislodge the poplar from the ground. We suspect that the impact of the pine striking the ground was then enough to release the poplar.

Safe work procedures were in place. Investigation revealed that all workers were adhering to these procedures to the best of their ability.

## ***Occupation Health and Safety Findings***

After a thorough investigation, OH&S suggested that management and employees of Polaris Land Services Ltd. review the section of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations that applies to felling and bucking trees. Polaris has always adhered to OH&S regulations and will continue to do so.

The Incident Investigation did make us aware of a deficiency in our Personal Protection Equipment requirements. The Action Form completed by the investigating OH&S officer included the following observation:

“Since lateral impact exists, employers shall ensure all employees wear CSA Standard Z94.1-92 hard hat.”

Mr. Greening was not wearing this model of hard hat. However, it would not have prevented his death. Nonetheless, we are distributing one to each of our employees to ensure that the risk of injury is minimized.

## ***Colleague Notification***

It is our observation that most line-clearing companies do not provide this model of hard hat to their employees. In the interest of safety of all employees of this industry, Polaris wishes to make our colleagues aware of this requirement.