Falling Tree Sends Worker To His Death



A crew was logging a right-of-way prior to road construction. A faller was preparing to cut down a tree. He signaled to another worker, waving with his yellow hardhat to indicate the direction in which he was going to fall the tree. The faller thought that the other worker had acknowledged his signal because he nodded his head. The tree came down and landed on the log the other worker was cutting. The branches struck him and he fell backwards. He hit his head on a sharp rock and received a fatal injury.

Ineffective communication is responsible for many workplace incidents in a wide variety of industries. The coroner’s jury also pointed to lack of supervision, poor job-site planning, lack of instruction in safe work practices, and chance-taking.

Know and use the standard signals for your work situation, and make sure everyone involved knows the meaning of the signals and the correct responses.