In just a little over two years, at least 16 Kentucky loggers have been killed as a result of being struck by falling trees or branches (12), or by logs falling from trucks they were unloading (4).

Described below are two representative fatal incidents, followed by our recommendations for prevention of similar incidents.

INCIDENTS and RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) A tree being felled hit a nearby dead tree, breaking branches which fell and hit the logger.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (a) Tree fellers should ensure that they properly evaluate the area around timber to be felled so that potential hazards can be identified and appropriate control measures implemented; (b) personal protective equipment (PPE), for example, hardhats, should always be used when felling trees; (c) loggers should ensure that emergency messages can be transmitted quickly, for example, by two-way radios or cellular phones; and, (d) a qualified person should be designated to conduct regular safety inspections.

(2) When the chains were loosened to unload at a sawmill, a log rolled off the truck onto the driver, killing him.

RECOMMENDATIONS: (a) The height of the stack of logs should not exceed the height of the vertical stakes on the truck; (b) chains should be long enough to allow unfastening on one side only; (c) sawmills should have written safety policies for unloading procedures, and enforce them; and, (d) sawmills should provide safety racks or unbinding cages which cover and protect drivers while unloading.

All loggers should attend the Master Logger Program for education regarding logging standards and safety procedures.

For additional safety information contact KY FACE at 1-800-204-3223, or, in Lexington 257-4955. FACE is a project of the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (a partnership of the KY Dept. for Health Services and the University of KY), located at UK Chandler Medical Center.