

## Investigation Process

### *What triggers an investigation by the N.C. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Division?*

- A worker's death.
- Hospitalization of an employee, an amputation or the loss of an eye.
- The department may also receive information of a fatality or catastrophe from media reports or referrals from other government agencies.

### *How is the NCDOL OSH Division notified?*

- An employer must notify NCDOL within eight hours of any work-related fatality. In-patient hospitalizations of one or more employees, any work-related amputation, and any work-related loss of an eye must be reported within 24 hours.

### *What will the investigation focus on?*

- The investigation will usually be limited to the events surrounding the accident unless observations at the site indicate a broader investigation is needed.

### *What will happen during the investigation?*

- An OSH investigator will go to the accident site and collect physical evidence, including photographs.
- The investigator will interview employees, witnesses and management officials about the accident to determine its cause.
- Any violations of safety and health standards will be noted and citations will be issued.

### *How long will the investigation take?*

- An investigation can take anywhere from a few weeks to six months, depending on the complexity of the accident.

### *When are investigation results disclosed?*

- Citations and penalties, if issued, can be released to the public on the issuance date.
- Other contents of the file cannot be released until the case is closed or final order on citations is rendered.



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## The Investigation

OSH investigators will seek to determine several factors, including whether:

- Personal protective equipment was worn, including hard hat, eye and hearing protection, safety shoes, saw chaps, and gloves.
- Employees remained at least 2 feet from the tree being cut.
- Damaged or lodged trees were cut down, removed or avoided.
- A safe distance from overhead power lines was observed. Any vehicle or machine with elevated parts must maintain a clearance of 10 feet.
- Equipment had proper safety devices.
- Loggers were trained on proper logging techniques.
- Employees were trained in first aid and CPR.

**Standards:** 29 CFR 1910.266, Logging Operations; 29 CFR 1910.269, Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution

**Industry Type:** General Industry

**Accident Type:** Struck by tree or limb during logging operations

**Statistical Data:** One of the 40 worker deaths NCDOL investigated from Oct. 1, 2013, through Sept. 30, 2014, involved a logging/tree trimming employee.

### *What programs does the Department of Labor have in place to prevent logging accidents?*

**Logging and arborist special emphasis program:** Increased training and consultation for loggers.

**Free training:** Training, including pro-logger safety class.

**Publications:** Logger Safety Checklist Booklet.