

72-year old man dies in tragic accident, crushed by logging truck

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

A 72-year old Stayton man, employed by Freres Lumber Company for more than 50 years, died Thursday from injuries he sustained when he was crushed by a reversing logging truck, Marion County Sheriff's deputies reported.

About 9 a.m. April 12, deputies were called to an area about 3 ½ miles up a logging road that branches off from NE Grade Road, approximately 5 ½ miles where Grade Road intersects with Highway 214. According to a news release, the site is in a remote area north of Silver Falls State Park, and the logging road is only wide enough for a single truck to pass at a time.

Preliminary investigation determined that Vernon Christensen, 72, was working as a flagger when the accident occurred.

Another Freres employee, 58-year old Edwin Wallace of Stayton, was driving a 2006 Kenworth truck up the hill and stopped to pick up another employee. Wallace had to back the logging truck up a short distance to where the man was waiting, and unfortunately Christensen was in the truck mirrors' blind spot and not visible to the driver. Deputies said the driver thought Christensen had returned to his nearby pickup.

While in reverse, the unloaded truck hit Christensen, causing crushing injuries that resulted in his death.

Investigators believe that the deceased was unable to hear the approaching truck because of engine noise from a nearby piece of logging equipment, and call the incident a "tragic accident".

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) are conducting independent safety evaluations.

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