

# **HIGH-SPEED DISC SAW BOP's DURING FIRE SEASON**

## *Voluntary measures to minimize wildfire ignition*

The purpose of *Best Operating Practices* for high-speed disc saws (aka Hotsaws) comes as a consequence of the 2007 wildfire season. During the '07 fire season, a number of small fires—and one large fire—were started by feller-bunchers utilizing hot saws.

A combination of drought and fuel loading has increased the severity of catastrophic wildfire in Montana. This emphasizes the importance of minimizing fire hazards on logging operations.

The following guidelines are an initial attempt to minimize hotsaw-related wildfires on a voluntary basis. Should these voluntary measures succeed, more stringent mandatory measures may not be necessary.

### **Recommended Guidelines**

- *Keep teeth sharp on high-speed disc saws; dull teeth are much more likely to burn and thus cause a fire ignition. The tree plate also needs to be installed properly and inspected for cracks. If it is broken, the weight of a tree can push the plate onto the saw and cause sparking; and woody fiber caught between the disc and the plate may ignite.*
- *Don't overload the accumulator which can cause burning when the butts of the accumulated trees are in contact with the turning saw.*
- *If the saw (teeth or bottom of the disk) comes in contact with the ground or a rock, shut the machine down and inspect the area around the machine for signs of fire or smoke.*
- *If saw burning occurs, especially on dead trees, get out and make sure an ignition did not occur—or remain in the area to make sure an ignition does not occur.*
- *As with other track machines, be aware when walking over and climbing over rock that a fire has not been ignited.*
- *In addition to a fire extinguisher, the hotsaw machine must have a 5 gallon backpack pump filled with water; and a usable fire tool. (Rule VIII, Montana Forest Fire Rules & Regulations.)*
- *After completing the work day, a fire patrol must be completed by a person with a fire tool and some means of communication. A pair of binoculars is also advisable for spotting smoke on the unit. This patrol shall include a walk throughout the unit where the hotsaw operated that day.*
- *If possible, keep skidding machines close behind the feller-buncher; a fire is more accessible and easier to extinguish when there are fewer piles on the ground.*
- *If water is not readily available on a job (lake or stream) additional water must be available on the job to refill backpack pumps.*

These voluntary guidelines are not conclusive rules that will prevent all fire ignitions by high-speed disc saws during fire season; however, they address a majority of the causes of fire started by this variety of feller-buncher.

As professional loggers it is up to the operators to address any additional fire-safety concerns on a machine or logging job. It is also imperative to report all fire ignitions on your logging job. This will reduce the chance of a fire getting away—or expedite suppression measures should reigniting occur at a later date.