



## Press Release

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### LAUNCH OF MAINE LOGGER HEALTH AND SAFETY PROJECT Northeast Center Launches 3 Year Project to Study Health and Safety of Maine Loggers

[All of Maine] **The Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (the NEC), has announced its newest project, the “Maine Logger Health and Safety Study”, which will assess the rate of chronic and traumatic health issues in the Maine Logging Industry.**

Loggers face the highest occupational fatality rate of any worker in the US, according to the most recent report from the Department of Labor<sup>1</sup>, yet the rates of non-fatal traumatic injury, cumulative trauma, and chronic disease for Northeast loggers remain unknown. The overarching goal of this research study is to provide a more complete picture of general worker health and occupational exposures for the Maine logging industry.

“We know that logging workers have the highest fatality rate of any civilian worker, almost 40 times higher than the average for all workers,” says Liane Hirabayashi, the study coordinator. “If that statistic is like a 3-inch high headline in a newspaper, then this study is the in-depth feature story. And to do it right, we’re going to spend some time with loggers and ask them about their daily lives. It’s a great opportunity, and I’m really looking forward to it.”

NEC researchers are calling loggers across Maine, asking for participation in the Maine Logger Health and Safety Study. The participants will complete quarterly surveys, a free one-time health screening, and will be rewarded for their time with gift cards along the way. All personal information will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected will be used to identify the biggest health issues loggers face, so that practical solutions can be developed to improve the safety of woodlots near you.

“Every worker deserves to return home to their family at night - no worse for wear, and with a little extra money in their pocket,” says study leader, Erika Scott, whose career in occupational health and safety was sparked by a family member’s work-related death. “No family should have to receive that dreaded call that the unimaginable has happened. That’s what drives me to do the work we do. What makes it even better is getting to know and learn from farmers, loggers, and fishermen every day. While these folks may have America’s most dangerous jobs, they also are America’s most hard working people.”

To follow the progress of the study, visit the study’s Facebook page, “Maine Logger Health and Safety Study”. Learn more about the NEC at [www.necenter.org](http://www.necenter.org). If you are a logger and you get a call for your participation, consider saying yes and sharing your experiences to improve the lives of current and future generations of loggers.

1. Statistics BoL. National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2015 (CFOI). 2016; <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>