

# PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 85

<b>Date:</b> April 2025	<b>Focus Group:</b> Harvesting Operations
<b>Topic:</b> Slash Management	<b>Issued by:</b> Nic Steens

**Background and Incidents:** While pulling back slash, a machine operator experienced a serious rollover after the waterlogged, unstable pile gave way. The task followed heavy rainfall and was carried out with sub-optimal equipment. Although the operator recognised the slash pile was unstable and relocated, his inexperience meant the warning signs didn't prompt further action – such as seeking advice, stopping work, or changing approach.

**Injury Details:** The operator suffered a minor shoulder injury and a headache but was otherwise unharmed. The incident could have been far worse – highlighting the risk of slash pullback without proper planning, preparation, equipment, or training.

**Risk Awareness:** Slash piles can become unstable, especially after rain or if left unmanaged over time. Verbal-only task instructions may not be sufficient for unfamiliar or high-risk work. Pressure to maintain work during tight markets can lead to sub-optimal task assignment – well intentioned but unsafe compromises. Operators may seem confident but still lack the full context or skills to manage a hidden risk.

**Safe Behaviours:** to minimise the risks:

- Manage slash – don't let it accumulate. Make it a scheduled part of the harvest.
- Use the right gear – some may not be suitable for pulling back slash near edges.
- Assign high-risk tasks only to experienced operators with clear instructions.
- Be aware of external pressures – don't compromise safety for other factors.

**For Site Manager:**

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators: ☐
2. Place on-site notice board or in file: ☐

**Site Manager:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**    /    /  
(initials)

