

Airway Heights prisoner dies clearing DNR land

It's the second such death in two years in Eastern Washington

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An Airway Heights prison inmate died today while clearing land for the state Department of Natural Resources.

Daniel J. Hall, 47, had been serving a sentence for drug and auto theft convictions since January 2011, the state Department of Corrections said in a news release. He was due to be released in September 2014.

The minimum-security inmate was clearing debris after a timber harvest in Stevens County, said DNR spokesman Peter Lavallee. The agency hasn't disclosed what happened to Hall to cause his death.

Last October, 22-year-old Airway Heights inmate Danny R. Bergeson was electrocuted cutting a tree near a power line on DNR land in Stevens County.

Lavallee said it's common for prison crews to work on DNR property.

He didn't know whether that policy will be reevaluated after the two inmate deaths, but said, "obviously we look for any lessons we can learn from any incident that involves the safety of our crew or the people who work for us."

DNR and Washington's labor and industries department are investigating Hall's death.

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