

FOREST INDUSTRY SAFETY ALERT

BCFSC # 2013-01-07 Fatality

It is with great sadness that the BC Forest Safety Council notifies the forestry community of our first direct harvesting related fatality of 2013. A log truck driver was fatally injured in a collision with another commercial vehicle on Highway 16, east of Prince Rupert. A third commercial vehicle was also involved and reports indicate that poor road conditions were a major factor in this incident.

Another fatal incident occurred earlier this month, when a pickup truck was involved in a collision with a log truck at a single lane bridge north of Mackenzie. This was not a direct harvesting related fatality as the deceased driver of the pickup was not employed in the forest industry.

These incidents are still under investigation and the exact causes are still being determined.

Below are some items to keep in mind for winter log truck operations:

- 1. Safe Driving Zones** - Give yourself the space to maneuver in case something goes wrong.
- 2. Do your pre-trip – all of it.** There are enough things that will surprise you during the day without your truck being one of them. Know your equipment.
- 3. Get the pre-work information you need.** Going on a new haul tomorrow? Talk to your supervisor and find out where you are headed, what sort of terrain it's in, what usual and unusual hazards you should expect to encounter.
- 4. Have a plan.** Thinking your day all the way through - including your safe arrival back home – will help you do exactly that.
- 5. Pay attention to the weather.** Check tomorrow's weather forecast the night before. 8 cm of new snow and -2 degrees and warming to +3 early afternoon? This could be a stressful day. But knowing what you are likely to encounter helps manage that stress.
- 6. Pay attention to your outside thermometer.** Don't have one? Get one. Sure the traction is fine at +5 degrees (i.e. the pavement is bare) and starts getting better below -5 degrees. But when temperatures hover a few degrees either side of zero, conditions get tricky.



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7. Keep an eye on the glaze. With your headlights on, scan the road ahead of you and watch for that tell-tale shine in the tracks ahead – it's slippery out there!

8. Set your eyes to scan. Scan ahead on the road as far as you can. Re-direct your gaze to the road immediately in front of you. Check out half way between you and the next corner. Mirrors. Dashboard. Road pattern. Left ditch. Right ditch. Repeat often, with a little variability to keep it fresh.

9. Have a backup plan. What's my escape route?

10. Use the buddy system. Rookie or seasoned veteran, we all appreciate knowing about a hazard before it becomes a surprise. If you see something that wasn't there yesterday, let your co-workers know.

11. Ditch the distractions. Both hands on the wheel, focus on the task at hand, leave the gadgets alone.

12. Professionalism Prevents Incidents – Drive patiently, anticipate problems and be courteous to all road users.

As more detail is made available on these incidents, the Council will provide additional resources and information.



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