

LOG TRUCK INCIDENT UPDATE

Within the last 5 days, the industry has experienced an unusually high number of log truck related incidents on public highways. Here is a summary of the recent incidents and an important reminder of industry best practices for log trucks.

Recent Incidents:

- On Saturday, Oct. 19th, a person riding a motorcycle on the Sea to Sky Highway at Whistler was fatally injured when struck by logs ejected from a toppled logging truck.
- On Oct. 21st, a logging truck incident occurred on the Nisga'a highway north of Terrace. The driver lost control of the truck, a guard rail was damaged and there was a small fuel spill into a stream. No injuries were reported.
- An incident occurred on Oct. 22nd when a log truck driver was found deceased in an empty log truck in the ditch of Highway 97 near Quesnel. No other vehicles were involved in this incident.
- On Oct. 23rd, a log truck lost control going around a corner on Highway 101 and struck a concrete barrier near Madeira Park on the Sunshine Coast. The trailer went over the barrier and into a ravine, pulling the truck with it. No injuries were reported.
- Also on Oct. 23rd, a logging truck wound up on its side after failing to make the turn on the Squilax-Anglemont road turnoff from the Trans-Canada Highway near Chase. The trucker reported that two tires on the trailer blew out just before the incident. No injuries were reported.

All of these incidents are still under investigation and it would be premature to speculate on causes. However, it is important for the industry and drivers to pause and reassess their trucking operations to make sure all safety requirements and best practices are being met. These include:

- Regular inspections of your rigging, tires, brakes and other components are essential to a successful day. Regulations prescribe points to inspect during your pre-trip. Of greater practical importance, are checks during the day – tires, wheel nuts, rigging, lights, mirrors, you know the list. Walk around the unit again while you are fuelling up and make sure everything is good to go for tomorrow. If something is wrong, get the mechanic to fix it that evening.

- Proper load securement is key to a successful trip. Properly loaded logs and well-maintained wrappers and bunks are necessary. By law, drivers are responsible to check and confirm the load is secure at all times. Practically, that means a check when you leave the loading site, before entering the highway system, and at all other times when / if the wrappers come loose during the trip. Doing additional check stops during long trips is a best practice and required by law in some cases.
- Overweight loads spell trouble. They increase stopping distance, impair vehicle dynamics and decrease truck stability. Consistent overloading severely taxes the ability of your equipment to reliably deliver. Overloading increases maintenance costs – not only for the truck owner, but for taxpayers (you and I) who have to invest more money in repairing our highways and bridges. Avoid overloading.
- Fatigue is a common contributor to many Motor Vehicle Incidents. Make sure you regularly get off-duty time (at least enough to comply with Hours of Service requirements). A healthy diet and adequate hydration is a good start, but when you are feeling a little worn out, pull over and hop out for a quick walk-about (during which you can re-check your tires). A 20-minute nap can do wonders. A well-rested driver is sharper and will react faster when something goes wrong.

These recent incidents have the public concerned about log truck safety. The media, on behalf of the public, quite rightly is questioning if loads are secured and checked, if vehicle inspections are being done, if trucks are in good mechanical shape, if loads are within weight limits, if speed is a factor and if drivers' hours at work are a factor. Some of the comments from the public on these stories support the progress that log truck drivers have made to improve safety, but many indicate ongoing concern.

Log truck drivers deliver over 1.5 million loads a year in BC. It only takes a handful of incidents for the public to lose confidence in our ability to keep them safe. Each load needs to be delivered safely.



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable