



SAFETY ALERT

OF THE MONTH

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Winter Risk Assessments

AOM# 2020-12-10

Winter conditions create new hazards and change risks. Poor weather, darkness and cold temperatures increase the risk associated with simple, everyday tasks. The consequences of a minor incident or injury may be made more severe by these winter conditions.

Winter Risks

1. **Slippery conditions** – Whether walking on a landing or bunching on a steep, icy slope, winter is about maintaining traction. Footwear should have good tread and tracked equipment may need ice lugs welded on. Slips, trips and falls are one of the most common sources of injury in the winter.
2. **Cold Temperatures** – A simple injury can become serious if the injured worker can't be kept warm. Worker check-ins should be more frequent during cold weather.
3. **Difficult Driving** – Fogged up windshields, increased darkness, fog and blowing snow are all challenging conditions during winter driving. Deep snow and icy roads increase the risks of getting stuck or sliding off the road.
4. **Equipment and Procedures** – Winter requires you to re-think how to accomplish regular tasks. Climbing up steel steps will be more slippery, a snowmobile may be needed to get to a worksite, road maintenance will need to include snow plowing and sanding.
5. **Avalanche Risks** - Many forestry operations happen in mountainous, avalanche-prone terrain. In some areas, avalanche risk may not be obvious. Regulation requires an assessment of the avalanche risk with procedures and plans put into place if necessary.
6. **Increased Production** - Winter is a high-production time of year which means more equipment and workers are on-site with tighter timelines. Some workers may be new to the job and will require a thorough safety and site orientation.





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7. **Flexible Plans** – Be prepared to stay at home when conditions are extreme. Blizzards create low visibility and extremely low temperatures can lead to incidents and equipment damage. Pre-plan for these events and scenarios in order to make the best decisions when storms arrive.

Additional Resources

- Avalanche Safety Resource Package – New resources from BC Forest Safety - www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3564
- Winter Safety Resource Package – www.bcforestsafe.org/node/1480
- Shift Into Winter – Winter Driving Safety Information - shiftintowinter.ca/



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Disclaimer: We encourage the sharing of information that can help improve safety for all workers.



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