

# Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

November 2019

## Safely Accessing Forestry Worksites

This *Safety Alert* will examine common forestry worksite controls and how to enter them safely. Please share this information broadly as this information applies not only to workers, but also members of the public and other industries.

### Planning

*The golden rule for entering any worksite, regardless of activity, is to ensure the person in control of the site knows you are there and has given you explicit permission to enter.  
Only proceed if both of these conditions are confirmed!*

Before travelling into the forest for work or recreation, pre-trip planning is critical. Ensure you have a two-way radio with sufficient battery life (if applicable) and the appropriate channels for the area. If possible, get information on the work being performed in the area so you know what to expect. Licensees will be able to provide this information to contractors and employees.

### A falling area

Falling includes both mechanical and hand falling activities. When falling activities are taking place, all other people **must** stay at least **two tree-lengths** from the tree being felled. In addition to the two tree-length rule, no one must work or travel downslope of a tree being felled. You **must** contact the faller or machine operator and receive permission to enter before approaching the faller or entering the worksite.



Image 1: Handheld two-way radios



Image 2: Active falling sign

When a falling activity could impact a road, a rope ("gate") will be tied across the road on both sides of the falling area. An "Active Falling" sign (see Image 2) with contact information will be tied to the gate or secured in plain view. Prior to going past the gate radio the site contact for permission to enter, even if you do not hear a saw or machine running. The contact will let you know when it is safe to enter. After the contact has given you permission to enter, remember to re-establish any gates that you take down to get through. Notify the site contact when you are clear of the area.

### Active harvesting

An active harvesting block, regardless of the current phase, may either have a gate similar to a falling gate or a sign that identifies the area as an active worksite (see image 3). If the road into the block is gated, this means there is a hazard impacting the road and you must follow the same process as for a falling worksite.



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If the road is not gated, switch your two-way radio to the identified channel, call your position and describe your intended route. Proceed with caution as other site workers may not have heard your call (e.g. working outside their vehicle) and won't know you are there.

## A blasting site

A blasting site will be gated with all necessary safety and contact information (see image 4). As with a falling gate, if you need to access or pass through the site, you must contact the person identified on the gate signage. Be familiar with blasting signals:

- At least 2 minutes prior to the blast there will be 12 short whistle signals
- After the blast, the “all-clear” signal is a single long whistle lasting at least 5 seconds.



Image 3: Active worksite signage. Image courtesy of Replant.ca



Image 4: Blasting gate

## Equipment working roadside

Unless the equipment is far enough away from the road that it would not create a hazard, you must contact the operator and get permission to pass. It is best practice for any equipment working roadside (e.g. an excavator improving ditches, or a processor decking logs) to have appropriate signage and contact information. However, this is not always the case, so if a piece of equipment is working roadside, stop and wait until the equipment operator notices you, grounds the head or attachments and gives you explicit permission to pass. Be sure to establish eye contact.

## Additional Resources:

- OHS Regulation 26.30 Traffic Control – Regulation on controlling access to falling sites: [www.worksafefbc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-26-forestry-operations#SectionNumber:26.30](http://www.worksafefbc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-26-forestry-operations#SectionNumber:26.30)
- Video of a truck driver using a falling gate (3:18-4:24): <http://youtu.be/1Ux13XTRSKU?t=198>
- Safety Alert – Blasting Close Call: [www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3111](http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/3111)

