

# Safety Alert of THE MONTH

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

August 2015

## Blasting Operations and Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)

### PROBLEM:

When blasting takes place, a company may file a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) which alerts pilots of the temporary blasting hazards. (See Nav Canada's NOTAM Procedures Manual, link below).

Often the NOTAM information is too general or broad in timeframe to be useful. As well, if pilots must sift through pages of NOTAMs to identify potential hazards in their flight path, there is the potential to miss key items. Local aircraft need to know exactly when and where blasting activities will take place.

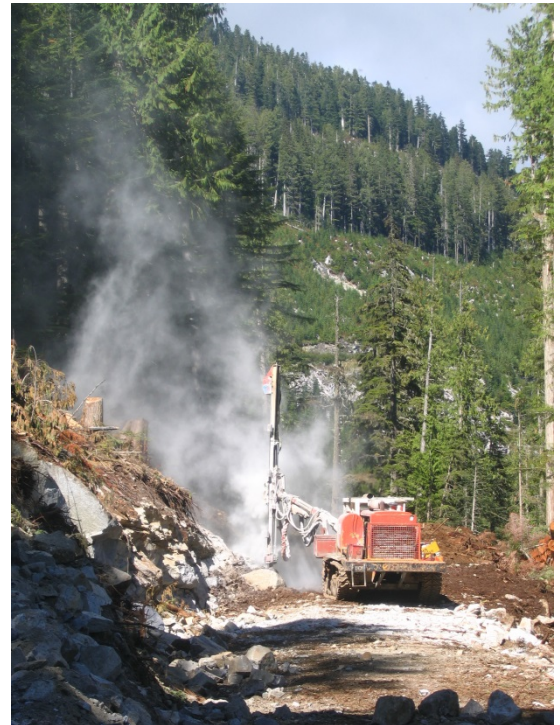
**\*\*Please note that the information below is specific to blasting activities in the Pacific Region, and applies to local traffic on the Coast.**

### SOLUTION:

123.2 MHz is a public radio frequency used as an advisory channel for aircraft along the BC coast. This frequency has been made available to broadcast intentions of blasting in order to replace NOTAMs. If used correctly it is a satisfactory method to guard the blast site against entry by aircraft.

### Instructions for sending a blast warning message on 123.2 MHz:

- Do not interrupt pilot conversations
- Be precise and keep conversations short
- Include the geographical location referenced to a prominent landmark, lat and long coordinates and the time to the blast
- Do not refer to road names as this information usually means nothing to pilots.
- Broadcast warnings 4 minutes and 1 minute prior to blast



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- If an aircraft is heading toward a blast, make contact and assist him with directions
- Be courteous and do not use slang or foul language
- Keep radio charged and in good working order

**If blasters detect an aircraft in the immediate vicinity of a blast they should direct a radio transmission to that aircraft using aircraft type and colour (for example, red and white helicopter, you are over an active blast site; clear the area immediately).**

Companies also recommend other means of informing local airlines and helicopters of areas where blasting activities are occurring. This step can include emails or phone calls, and putting pins on maps at aircraft bases to identify blasting locations. Another advantage of informing helicopters of blasting activity is that they will know where to go in the event of an emergency requiring worker evacuation.

By using the 123.2 MHz frequency to alert local aircraft pilots of blasting, all aircraft in the area will be informed directly of the imminent hazards due to blasting. This approach communicates the exact information about the blasting activity, and will better inform pilots of areas that must be avoided. It also reduces the volume of information in NOTAMs, allowing pilots to focus on the most important items.



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## Supporting resources:

Nav Canada's Aeronautical Information Management, Canadian NOTAM Procedures Manual  
<http://www.navcanada.ca/EN/media/Publications/NOTAM-Manual-EN.pdf>

### Excerpt 5.5.5. from Nav Canada's Canadian NOTAM Procedures Manual Blasting:

"In the Pacific Region, NOTAM will not be filed regarding blasting related to logging activities under the following circumstances:

- If using instantaneous blasting equipment (blasters will ensure the area is clear of all air traffic prior to the blast).
- If using a standard 6 minute fuse and using aeronautical frequency radio (blaster will make two transmissions on 123.2 MHz advising of the imminent blast. These transmissions will be at approximately 4 minutes and 1 minute prior to the estimated blast. These transmissions will include the geographical location referenced to prominent landmark and the time to the blast)."

Notwithstanding the above two calls, if blasters detect an aircraft in the immediate vicinity of a blast they will direct a radio transmission to that aircraft using aircraft type and colour (for example, red and white helicopter, you are over an active blast site; clear the area immediately). Blasters may elect to use both methods for added safety.

Notwithstanding the above recommendations, a NOTAM will be required if the blast site is within 5 nautical miles of an aerodrome or if the blaster elects not to use either of the above procedures. In any case, the NOTAM will have a maximum duration period of 14 days.

