

# Safety Alert of THE MONTH

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

July 2015

## Heavy Equipment Safety on Wildfires

Many logging and trucking contractors will be working on wildfires this summer. Wildland firefighting is hazardous work and it is vital that equipment operators are well trained and have all the necessary tools to be effective and safe. The following information provides tips and advice on how to stay safe this fire season.

### *Equipment Selection and Maintenance*

- Have your best equipment and people on a fire. A wildfire is no place for an unreliable bulldozer or a brand new operator.
- Make sure your heavy equipment is well maintained: no hydraulic leaks, a solid undercarriage, and a clean rad and engine compartment. Hot air temperatures and a buildup of materials on the radiator can easily lead to overheated engines.
- Find out what conditions you'll be working in and choose the right machine. Big timber requires a large machine while wet and soft ground conditions will require low ground pressure equipment.
- Have the appropriate safety equipment on board. Check your lights, fire extinguishers, spill and first aid kits and make sure they are adequate.



### *Training*

- At a minimum, all workers on the fire must have S-100 training that must be refreshed every year. The best refresher is hands-on training with the equipment that will be used on the fire.

### *Communication and Teamwork*

- Most heavy equipment operations work with teams of 3 machines. This is effective for fire guard building and provides a safety factor. The team can pull out a stuck bulldozer or quickly build a safe zone around a disabled machine.



# Safety Alert of THE MONTH

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

- Make sure there is a heavy equipment boss to lead each team of heavy equipment. This boss is a very important leader, safety lookout, navigator, and communication link to the incident commander. Heavy equipment bosses provide daily safety briefings to their operators and keep them updated on changing weather and fire conditions throughout the day.
- Radio communication is essential for all equipment on the fire. Operators need to be able to communicate with each other and with the dozer boss at all times.

## *Don't Get Trapped*

- Getting trapped in a wildfire is a significant risk. There are several factors that can lead to getting trapped: poor visibility from smoke, miscommunication or poor directions, not sticking to the plan, getting hung up or stuck close to the fire, and sudden weather shifts. Review emergency procedures on what to do if you do get trapped and overrun by the fire.



## *Resources*

### **Fire Dozer Safety Page from California**

<http://www.californiadozeroperatorsgroup.org/safetypage.html>

### **Wildfire Entrapment Safety Video**

<https://archive.org/details/gov.nwcfg.nfes.2856.8>

