

Safety Alert of THE MONTH

March 2013

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

Preventing Debris in Loads of Logs

A short distance before entering the highway system, Keith turns into the pull-out and does the necessary walk-around inspection of his truck and load – tighten and secure wrappers, check the tires, wheels and nuts, check between all duals, confirm electrical and hitch connections, clean the lights, etc. Keith has a well-practiced check system. Nine times out of ten there is nothing unusual to see, but he prefers noticing and correcting little things before they become big problems at 90 km/hr. Plus, the pit stop gives him a mental break and he is able to stretch his back, arms and legs. This gets his blood flowing and improves his alertness for the rest of the trip to town.

Today, Keith is particularly glad to have checked his load – he finds a hard-hat sized rock half-cocked and ready to fall out of his load at the next frost heave.



Example of a rock found in a load of logs.

Recently, there have been numerous very serious, and potentially very serious, incidents involving rocks or other debris. Reports are that the rocks fell out of a load of logs, were ejected from between the truck or trailer tires, or had been “kicked-up” by a passing truck.

- On October 12th, a Calgary mom was killed instantly when a rock (about 30 cm x 13 cm) from a passing truck came through the windshield of the vehicle in which she and her family were travelling.
- On November 7th, a Duncan man was killed by a rock that came off of a loaded log truck travelling in the opposite direction. The rock was the size of a brick and bounced off the road before coming through the windshield of the pick-up truck.
- On November 21st, a loaded log truck was waiting to turn onto the road when an empty log truck kicked up a rock, striking and destroying the windshield (and showering glass through the cab).



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- On February 13th, an empty log truck met a loaded log truck. As they passed, a rock was thrown up by a tire on the loaded truck and hit the middle of the driver side windshield on the empty truck.



Sort operators acknowledge it's a "daily occurrence" to see the arrival of loads with rocks and other debris that is large enough to be potentially lethal in the wrong circumstances. In addition to the risks this debris poses to road traffic, once the debris is on the paved or icy sort yard, it can become a deadly projectile, or a costly "tire-wrecker".

We can work together to avoid these incidents.

Road crews

- Minimize fly-rock from road construction operations as this rock could end up embedded in the logs.
- Avoid spoiling or side-casting excess shot rock / ballast onto roadside right of way wood.

Loader Operators

- Locate logs decks away from sites with road and logging debris that could inadvertently find its way into a load.
- "Clean" decking sites.
- Pay extra attention to right of way wood and wood harvested near areas where blasting occurred.
- If morning round is loaded in darkness or poor light conditions, prepare those loads the day before, when visibility is better, and you can "clean" the load.



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- Keep the loader lights well maintained, and the windshield clean. Good visibility is key to eliminating debris in the loads.

Truck drivers

- Watch what's being loaded on your rig. Let the operator know when you see debris in the grapple.
- Thoroughly check each load for debris. Do this while you are still at the block and have the assistance of the loader to remove the debris.
- Loads settle and shift; thoroughly check each load again before entering busy traffic areas.
- Look on the lower corners of the load, but also get down there so you can see underneath and into the "belly" of the load.
- Look for rocks or other debris between all duals. Stick your head in there so you can see all the way around.
- Check flat surfaces of your rigging (e.g. reach, frame rail, bunk / bolster) where a rock could be sitting, waiting to fall off at next corner. Sweep debris onto the ground – at 100 km/hr., a 7 cm (<3") rock can penetrate a windshield!
- Pay close attention when you have been travelling through muddy sections, and where you have spied rocks that are "just the right size" to get stuck between the tires.
- When you see a nasty rock on the road, stop and throw it off. If you have already passed by before you notice, let the trucker behind you know about it.

Supervisors

- Discuss debris in loads during pre-work meetings. It will take everyone on site working together to eliminate these hazards.

Additional Resources:

1) Industry Safety Alert about debris in loads:

<http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2264>

2) Road Safety At Work – a resource for everyone who drives as part of their job

<http://www.roadsafetyatwork.ca/>

