

# Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

November 2009

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

## Pulling your weight on resource road bridges, be sure to do it safely

The annual freeze-up is taking hold across most of the province, and timber harvesting and hauling is resuming on resource roads and bridges. As traffic volumes build, log truck drivers and heavy equipment operators need to be clear on bridge load ratings and your gross vehicle weight (GVW).

### Simple question, careful answer

The basic question is simple enough. Can a particular bridge support the weight of your vehicle or equipment as it crosses from one side to another?

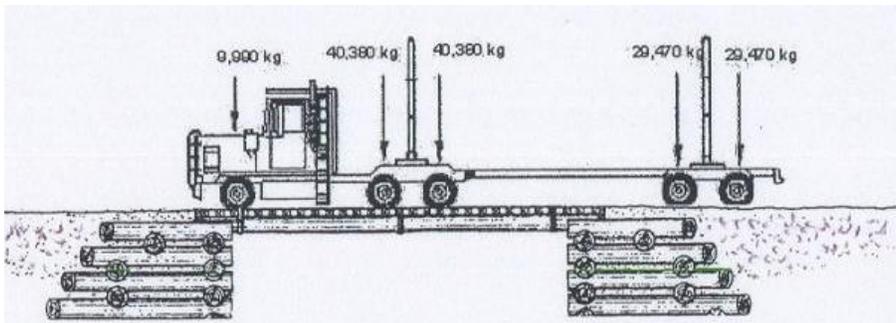
Your answer should be based on the bridge's load rating, which includes its maximum allowable Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW). This is the total combined weight of your vehicle and cargo.

But it's important to remember that a load rating specifying a certain GVW does not mean the bridge can safely accommodate any vehicle at or below that weight. A lot depends on other critical factors like how the load is distributed, the number of axles and the length of the vehicle / equipment, as well as the state of repair of the bridge itself.

An example of the importance of bridge maintenance and inspection of guiderails and riser blocks was recently the topic of a Safety Alert produced by TimberWest at their Oyster River operation. For the full TimberWest Safety Alert [click here](#).

### What's needed is a risk assessment

Example:  
Design Vehicle Load  
Diagram - BCFS L165  
(GVW 149,700 KGs)



Source:  
[BC Ministry of Forests and Range Engineering Bulletin # 1](#)

Failure to assess the carrying capacity of a bridge can have disastrous results. A proper risk assessment is necessary to protect workers, prevent equipment damage and demonstrate due diligence. This should be part of the safety management system of any SAFE Company running vehicles and equipment on resource roads.

Documenting your inspections of the bridges on your haul route as well as confirming that the bridge's load rating is sufficient for your trucks' GVW are some records that will form part of your documentation requirements during the SAFE Companies audit. And remember, if you aren't sure, get a second qualified opinion before you put yourself and your equipment at risk.

To assist companies in meeting the bridge inspection documentation requirements, the BCFSC has posted a selection of bridge inspection checklists provided by Western Forest Products and the Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR). For sample copies of the bridge inspection checklists [click here](#).

Ultimately, only a qualified person like an engineer can determine a bridge's carrying capacity. If you find a bridge whose load rating is doubtful or unknown, call the licensee or the Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR).

For more information, see a MOFR bulletin released this fall and available on the BCFSC website: [click here](#).

