

SAFETY ALERT

Near Miss

March 14, 2018

Potential Hazards

- Loss of radio contact with fellow workers.
- Changed or blocked access.
- Long time waiting to be rescued in difficult/remote terrain.
- Serious injury or death from being caught in avalanche.

Preventative Actions

- Consult www.avalanche.ca for region specific snow conditions and avalanche risk before heading out to the field.
- Review your Avalanche Safety Plan prior to conducting work in mountainous snow covered terrain.
- Monitor snow conditions throughout the day and change plans accordingly.
- Be aware of the following conditions that increase the potential of avalanche:
 - Recent rapid rise in above freezing temperatures and or wet conditions.
 - Recent loading of snowfall 30cm or more in the last 48hrs.
 - Evidence of slab avalanches in the area.
 - Signs of snowpack instability including “whumpfs”, shooting cracks, or drum-like sounds.
 - 30 degree slopes or greater.
 - Evidence of avalanche history, such as sparsely treed area or open forest on alpine slopes.
 - Strong winds causing blowing snow and slab development.
 - Sustained heavy snowfall >2cm per hour.
- **ALWAYS avoid the area and adjust plans if there is any risk of avalanche.**

Incident Summary

- Contractor was completing recce work in an area that was only accessible by helicopter.
- Crews were working on south facing slopes that were in excess of 40% with poor snow conditions.
- The crew caused several snow sluffs & slides while walking along the side slopes that were big enough to knock a worker downhill.
- The largest slide was 15-20m wide and over 1m deep and travelled at least 100m down toward the stream below the block.



Safety Contacts

Follow up questions to ask your worker:

1. How would you determine the avalanche risk level in the area you are working?
2. What are some signs of avalanche risk to look for?

