

SAFETY ALERT

Forestry Harvesting Operations

Wheels lock up on icy road, crew truck slides to a “soft landing” in snow-filled ditch

Location: Kenney Dam Road – Vanderhoof, BC

Date: January 5, 2015

Details of Incident: Cruising crews finished work for the day at 4:00 p.m. While the two sleds were being loaded and the truck was warming up, the driver cleared the recent snow off the windshield (1-2cm).

Once everything was loaded and secured on the flat deck, the crew got into the vehicle while still wearing their rain gear and boots as they were chilled from the sled ride and it was a short 30 minute drive back to town.

The truck entered the main public road and drove a short distance (1,000m) when the windshield started fogging up. The driver removed a file folder from the dash thinking it was obstructing the heat flow, when the entire windshield became frosted and unable to see out of.

The driver applied the brakes (approximate vehicle speed of 40 km/h) but the wheels locked up on the ice and the vehicle gradually entered the right hand ditch, coming to rest at a 45 degree angle.



Previous freezing rain and snow accumulation of 30cm made for unusually poor road conditions.

The large amount of snow in the ditch softened the impact for both the vehicle and the passengers. No vehicle damage or personal injury occurred.

Learnings & Suggestions:

- Before a crew vehicle leaves a worksite ensure all snow / ice is removed from the windshield and all other glass, mirrors and external marker lights
- Snow must be fully removed from the hood, grill, front bumper and especially the roof, as it may quickly slide onto the windshield, obstructing the driver
- Don't drive a vehicle until there is sufficient cab heat to fully defrost the windshield. Keep on full defrost mode until it is safe to switch to a mix of floor / defrost
- Ensure there are no large objects on the dash that may obstruct heat flow.

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