

## “LOADED at 62...or am I empty?”

by MaryAnne Archand

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Radio calling procedures for hauling and driving in BC's forests have become more and more confusing over the past few years; especially in the areas affected by the mountain pine beetle. We have a whole range of calling procedures, “rules of the road”, and directions that are confusing the heck out of forestry drivers and other road users.

In many places, the vehicles heading out of the bush, back towards a highway, would call “loaded”; but in these days of two-way hauling, the vehicle might be empty or loaded either way. Some places call “in” and “out”, but in to where and out of what? Others say “north” and “south”, but how many roads stay straight in one direction? And then there's “up” and “down”. Ok, so I'm up the Kluskus, out on the Blue, south on the 2600, I have a load on, but I'm going in as an “empty”.... confused yet?

This confusion has been a contributing factor in many crashes on resource roads, and is going to get a lot of attention at the inquest into a trucker's death near Mackenzie that is going to take place in Prince George next month. We need to find a way to get some consistency on this “tool” that is used by thousands of forestry workers every day as one of their safety mainstays.

There are so many frequencies and channels being used in the bush that Industry Canada has lost all count of who is using what. And there are so many vehicles calling on some of them, especially on the extremely busy multiple-industry use roads in the north, that there's only room for one way calling. Trying to track everybody, and get your own calls in, is extremely distracting, and after a while it becomes white noise. When guys want to chat, they switch channels, because in most places chatting isn't allowed on the road channel. But when they do that, they're not listening to the road channel. And then, of course, there's the “Knowledge Network” (LADD channels).

Industry Canada is undertaking a major overhaul of the resource road radio channel system. They say the change is needed because the recent peak and increasing diversity of resource activity on BC's 650,000 kms of resource roads has strained the existing system, leading to a number of problems including confusion and misinformation on what road channels are in use and where, such as:

- too many different radio channels in use
- channels are not exclusive to resource road use, often resulting in interference to safety services and other users
- some resource companies that operate these roads appear to be unclear on the process to inform Industry



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Canada what channels are in use and where  
• vehicles are using radio-assisted roads without having the right channels programmed in their radios

The solution Industry Canada has come up with is to identify 35 radio channels to be used exclusively for Resource Roads in BC, which will be identified by a RR designation, which will be the same all over the province. So for vehicles moving around to meet the demands of industry, no matter where they go, they'll have the resource road safety channels programmed into their radios.

Pilots are planned this year for the Vancouver Island/Sunshine Coast, and for the Tumbler Ridge area. Stay tuned for further details. In the meantime, Industry Canada has issued a one-pager explaining the basics and what it's going to mean to radio users. You can get a copy by emailing [arcand@bcforestsafesafe.org](mailto:arcand@bcforestsafesafe.org) or any one of the 4 District offices of Industry Canada [princegeorge.district@ic.gc.ca](mailto:princegeorge.district@ic.gc.ca) or [surrey.district@ic.gc.ca](mailto:surrey.district@ic.gc.ca) or [Kelowna.district@ic.gc.ca](mailto:Kelowna.district@ic.gc.ca) or [Victoria.district@ic.gc.ca](mailto:Victoria.district@ic.gc.ca) or go on the BC Forest Safety Council website, [www.bcforestsafesafe.org](http://www.bcforestsafesafe.org) and click on Forestry TruckSafe. For those of you who don't do email (and good on ya!), call 1-877-324-1212 and we'll fax or mail you a copy. Keep on truckin', and remember...

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