



June 2010 ----ISSUE 118

DIRECTOR'S NOTE:

A few months ago we requested feedback on the Radio Communications Forest Roads Stakeholder Discussion Paper. Below is a brief summary from the responses we received.

SIGNAGE - Signs on forest service roads are recognized as critical to safety. There is a question of who exactly is responsible for financing and/or managing the production and installation of the signs. There is some contention around what needs to be standardized on the signs to enhance safety and what doesn't; information posted, format of information, materials used to make the signs, location of signs. It is recognized that the signage is somewhat dependant on the calling protocols that will be adopted. There is a hope that the signage standardization will allow for some flexibility by region and/or road type.

CALLING PROCEDURES - The proposed calling procedures were a point of contention with the majority of respondents. It cannot be ignored that many respondents felt that over reliance on radios in some cases is resulting in poor driving habits, and that proper driving habits and attitudes need to be emphasised to ensure safety. Since this research, The Ministry of Forests and Range have released new radio call procedure defaults to be implemented on all forest roads May 1, 2010. These procedures include Interval, Call Content, and Convoy calling procedures. These defaults represent an adjusted protocol that allows for provincial standardization paired with the flexibility to address local issues. Upon review it is clear that many of the issues that cropped up during public consultation are addressed with these new procedures, and they are endorsed by the BC Forest Safety Council as the default standard, leaving room for local customizations. For a link to the MoFR direction memo (add the link)

CHANNEL AVAILABILITY - There is a real concern with regards to the number of channels that will be available from both those who did and did not take part in the pilot programs. Some respondents feel that the implementation of 5 watt channels resulting in the increased need to switch channels will directly impact worker safety. The perception is that the implementation of standardized tones will be compromised by the widespread use of wide band and unlicensed radio communications, and will require diligent enforcement.

RADIO HARDWARE AND PROGRAMMING - Quality issues are being experienced with the 5 watt (vs. 30 watt) service, attributed mainly to widespread faulty circuitry of the radios which does not affect the 30 watt service. The addition of tones is seen to compound an existing issue with getting radios programmed correctly, and there are known issues with 5 watt not working on some radios in use today.

IMPLEMENTATION, TIMING, & COMMUNICATIONS - Most respondents assert that the road entrance signs should be replaced first, with the rest replaced on regular replacement schedule and on new roads. The general position is that the entire standardization protocol should be rolled out province wide at one time to ensure compliance and safety. Proper communication of all aspects of the program to road users is seen to be a critical part of the implementation, and assisting companies with training guidelines might go a long way to ease the transition. It is believed by respondents that the communications plan will be multi-pronged and require the co-operation of province wide associations and road user groups.

Based on the feedback received, these 'next steps' are recommended by the Transportation Safety Program:

SIGNAGE - In accordance with the new calling procedures, road entrance signs should be altered to address the new calling "up/down" if that is not what the signs currently state. All other existing signage will remain as is for the time being. BC Forest Safety Council could help develop a full set of default sign standards that include; both content and placement locations for all forest road signage. These new default standards will provide a template for all *new* or replacement signs after May 1st 2011, and does not affect signs currently in use. Over time signs will eventually come into compliance with the standard as signs are replaced, rather than a large one time capital investment.

CHANNELS- Feedback from this discussion paper, as well as from communications with pilot road user groups and other associations indicates that there are currently some significant technical issues with the proposed channel scheme. We support the continuation of the pilot projects to hopefully try to solve these problems. BC Forest Safety Council will be initiating discussions between the Ministry of Forests and Industry Canada to see if we can do more to help resolve these issues or find other solutions. The channel standardization will not be ready to implement prior to May 2011.

If you have comments, or would like to request additional information, please contact our Prince George office toll free 1-877-324-1212.

Chuck Carter, RPF

SAFETY SYSTEM FOCUS NEW FOREST ROAD RADIO CALLING DEFAULT PROTOCOL

A message from the Ministry of Forests & Range

New Procedures for British Columbia's Forest Roads

Ministry of Forests and Range staff is working with the BC Forest Safety Council and other industrial-road users on a consistent approach to radio procedures to improve road-use safety. Our goal is to achieve a provincial standard while still providing the flexibility for Road Safety Committees to address local safety issues.

The new protocol uses terms "up and down" for calling the direction of travel along the road instead of the current terms, such as empty and loaded. These basic calling procedures also clarify signage and simplify convoy calling rules. All other components of the calling procedures will be developed by local Road Safety Committees to address local needs. The new protocol allows infrequent users such as emergency responders to be cognizant of the protocol enhancing safety for all users.

The new protocols were released May 1, 2010 and will be applied to Forest Service Roads via local agreement or District Manager's discretion. The Ministry of Forests and Range is committed to maintaining high safety standards to keep both forest workers and the public safe. We will continue to work with forest licensees and other stakeholders as we apply consistent procedures across B.C.

B.C. Forest Road Radio Protocol

Drivers using a radio should call the following, unless directed otherwise by a sign posted on the road:

- **when:** starting, stopping, entering or leaving a road
- **at "must call" signs**
- **every 2 km**
- **"up"** with increase or **"down"** with decrease in km signs
- **in order** of road name, up/down, km, number of vehicles (if convoy calling), vehicle type (optional)

No call if part of convoy called by lead vehicle within 1 km. *May 2010*



Guide for Safe Travel on Forest Roads

- Drive at a safe speed for conditions and expect traffic
- Beware of industrial, commercial and recreational traffic
- Be aware that roads are 2-way radio assist, not radio controlled
- Yield to industrial traffic and utilize turnouts
- Stay alert and obey traffic signs
- Use seatbelts

May 2010



YOUR VOICE

We would really like to hear from you, the road user, on what road safety issues you see and how they can best be addressed. Direct your e-mail suggestions or comments to carter@bcforestsafe.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 31 – June 1	First Annual Upper Island Safety Conference, Campbell River
June 3-5	Resources Expo, Prince George
June 8 – 10	BC Bioenergy Conference, Prince George