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Safety in Forestry Transportation

TruckSafe Rumbings is published biweekly to keep you informed on what is happening in forest hauling safety in BC. Call MaryAnne Arcand to provide input or get the news out on best practices and concerns in the industry.

Feedback from Draft Radio Protocols published in last Rumbings

Today's issue of Rumbings features some of the written feedback we've received about the draft radio calling protocols outlined in the September 24 edition of Rumbings. Your response to these comments is welcomed, or your feedback and input regarding the draft rules. Hope to hear from you soon! arcand@bcforestsafe.org or fax to (250)562-9237

Hello Mary Ann! I am interested in seeing what can be done about proper driver training, especially in the forest industry. The forest industry has taken on the new slogan of unsafe is unacceptable and yet I have seen many "new" driver's thrown into unsafe conditions with completely inadequate training. The driver training courses which are provided to those who are looking to get into professional driving, are to say the least, a waste of time and money! These courses merely teach people how to shift gears and that's about it. Because I have been in the industry for a while I know what it takes to be able to drive on these roads in the adverse conditions that are thrown at us. The fact is that nothing is more important than experience, but with that being said, there has to be a better way to prepare new drivers for the conditions other than a one month course where you do nothing more than drive around town. I have thought for years that with new drivers becoming fewer and farther between, is it a case of people not being comfortable with the conditions, and possibly not feeling confident enough with their own abilities! I have had two different parties approach me lately about this subject, I would like to speak with you, if possible, to see what your thoughts are, and to see if you have much experience with this subject through your involvement in the forestry industry.

- Sean

Dear Maryanne: I received some of the outcomes and discussions and would like to provide the following comments.

- I think this will be very difficult to agree on a radio protocol whether it be using standardized terminology, frequency of calling, loaded clear empty etc.... You will never get total agreement. I can only relay to you what we have tried and what is working the best. You may be aware that the Sukunka Road is one of our busiest resource roads in this area. Last year we adopted a procedure where by empties call on to the road at 0km, and then do not call at all. Empties clear all loaded vehicles. Loaded vehicles have the right of way and call all KM's loaded. Despite some hesitation initially, now that we have worked with this procedure for the last year and a half, it has worked the best.
- Signage on roads, especially mainlines has always been an issue, and we have discussed this at great length. I agree that signage should be standardized and needs to be implemented to a higher standard.
- Standardized radio frequencies and channels is a great idea and we would support that 100%. We are confident that the trial will confirm that.
- I did have some concern with policing of the radio output power to minimize overlap. As you are aware radio's are primarily used for traffic control, but are also a powerful tool in obtaining emergency help. To force users to lower the output power of the radio they have could limit their ability to communicate effectively in an emergency situation. Myself, I have found that I just use the squelch on my radio to limit the chatter.

- Ben

Signage

To make the sign entirely reflective seems an over kill. We have been placing a 1.5 inch X 1.5 inch reflective patch on all of our new signs for the past couple of years, this seem adequate to bring the drives attention to the sign and help locate km boards in the dark.

Our number are a min. 6inch black vinyl placed on yellow core-plast, This allow easy replacement of damaged or missing signs since the material to create new signs can be carried in your pick-up.

- Rob

Hello MaryAnne: One question I have about this standard, and as a forest Licensee that deals with tremendous heavy haul oil and gas traffic in NE BC, how are these draft standards being communicated to the oil and gas industry? I assume that they would have to follow the same

rules on any and all road systems?

- Rod

MaryAnne

The draft protocol looks good, but could use a little more clarification in a couple of places.

#1 “Up traffic” should clear “Down traffic”

- Pickups should clear trucks regardless of direction.
- Empty trucks should clear loaded trucks.

This is important because although the road may appear wide enough that the loaded truck could move closer to the edge of the road, it is not always safe to do that.

#3 “Direction – Km – Road” type of vehicle up for discussion

- I prefer km – direction – Road – type of vehicle.

Example:

“21 down two loaded” or “7up Jameson empty bed”. It takes just 4 or 5 words to provide all the information you need to know. Providing the km first alerts one to traffic that is *nearby*.

Providing the type of vehicle informs oncoming traffic what they need to know to prepare for a safe meet. By the way, Hayracks and Super Bs should disclose what they are too when they are unloaded. (In the snow they may need a special meeting place in order to get mobile again unless they are wearing chains.)

#8 Passing

- Flashing lights and honking the horn may work. Assuming you can hear the horn. I have another method, Use the radio. If the one attempting to pass does not have a radio, they are better off following.

I was interested in the comments from a participant in the workshops. And that reminded me that I definitely want to be in the workshop that talks about road standards. I believe this is the biggest problem of all, and the root cause of many other problems

- Alan

Hi MaryAnne:

I have been servicing log haulers and highway haulers for over fifteen years with radio communications. With the new Industry Canada frequencies being implemented in the future some aggravation regarding programming and licensing will be experienced by truckers.

I understand you will be conducting educational sessions regarding the use of two way radios on logging roads. Myself and our staff thought that through education the following may be of interest to you:

- frequencies will be narrow band & toned
- older vhf radios will not be compatible to these specifications
- Industry Canada has confirmed that the new frequencies can not be programmed into any radio that is not licensed
- Licensing can take a few weeks to complete

In order to avoid aggravation we suggest that preparation for future frequency changes be included in the educational sessions provided by TruckSafe and the following be highlighted:

- apply for license now (applying for license at time of programming will qualify for programming authorization)
- letter of permission for private frequencies - required prior to programming radio (customer responsibility)
- advise of possible new radio purchase (up-grade to accommodate new frequencies)

As a radio service supplier we can foresee some aggravation looming on the horizon. Through pre-implementation education a lot of inconveniences could be avoided.

The above is offered as a personal suggestion only.

- Bill

Hi MaryAnne

“UP” and “DOWN” calling, we have evolved in the last 30 years. I have been in the bush when we called North, South, etc. Then on to Empty and Loaded both ways to just loaded only calling, with the empties calling upon entering roads and in special circumstances, otherwise we were quiet and listening for loaded traffic. Not only is “UP” and “DOWN” harder to say it is not as explanatory as loaded and empty. There is no mistaking what that means.

Call Direction: we already do this, lowbeds, gravel trucks, maintenance vehicles, service vehicles call both directions when they feel they need to.

Convoy Calling: Other than calling yourself a “caboose”, as far as keeping the loaded truck informed of the status of the convoy, the lead truck calls the number in the line up and when the last truck meets an empty vehicle they let them know they are last in the line up and that it is

clear to go.

Default Rule: This is already in use. It doesn't take long to figure out how things are done on a new road. If a driver does have trouble another driver will inform the others.

Signage: This should be standardized, signs to kilometers, pullouts and road hazards.

Passing: The flashing lights and honking is not acceptable, whether passing a loaded or empty vehicle the drivers should make eye contact or radio confirmation that it is clear to pass. If the passing vehicle can not make eye contact or verbal contact, they should wait until the loaded driver sees the other vehicle in the mirror and watch the driver to see when he gives a sign that it is clear to go.

Radios Being Programmed Alike: I do not agree with this. Different areas use their own channel groupings and program the channels close together, this way it doesn't take long to get from channel to channel as they need it.

Radio Power: All radios should have the maximum power aloud. A low powered radio will not work in an emergency situation. As for "Walking Over" this will happen in a busy area anyway, radio users need to be aware of the signs of a "walk over" and make the call again if you think your call had been covered.

If you implement your standardized Draft as it is written, what are the percentages and possibilities of accidents while radio users are made to change their current calling procedures? I think the possibilities are great considering the size of this province and the amount of radios being used.

While I realize you are trying to keep people from getting hurt, making calling "UP" and "DOWN" and making radio channels the same in every bush radio is not the answer. Whatever changes you do or do not make there will be flaws in all of it. I feel the current procedures we are using are working well.

- Terry

MaryAnne

Regarding your radio protocol for the forestry sector it appears to be a bit confusing on my part, for decades the "LOADED AND EMPTY" protocol has been used.

The conception is that this is because you go to the bush empty and return loaded, Up and down, North and south, east and west leaves quite a large area for confusion and it will definitely take decades or more to get this understanding across the industry.

I truly believe that you will see an increase of accidents due to this confusion.

Hi Mary-Anne! Quick read on the last notice from TruckSafe showed the sign everyone agreed to. In the text, the discussion noticed that yellow signs blend in with leaves in the fall – so true, so we put a bright orange or red strip on the end of the sign to get some contrast, and reflective on main roads is always a good idea, some spur roads don't matter much cause the speeds are so slow, or they are so short the risk is way lower. Also, in our area, everyone uses loaded/empty, because we never go empty towards the mill, but we sometimes go UP loaded, in fact, adverse roads are common here. I know I know, sometimes a person has to change. Still, we prefer that,-----I suppose it won't be a big deal because that part isn't that confusing province wide, everyone knows what the two versions mean. One last thing, it would sure be great to see some statistics printed from our trucker groups (the experts) on some of the handling characteristics of the different log hauling configurations. Or even just overall opinion. Cornering, maintenance, braking, backing up whatever. For instance, we really need tridrive quads to haul beetle kill, but are concerned about steering axle weight, turning radius on switchbacks, and overall weight, braking and steeper grades. Perhaps this is all available from FERIC (new name?), but might be a good topic for one of your issues. Just a thought. Thanks for the hard work at the council.

- Dean

YOUR VOICE

I am writing this letter to you in hopes something can be done about all the trucks running without headlights.

There have been several near misses lately in the heavy fog. (Miles are called but in fog that's not enough) It should be mandatory they are on at all times. I have attended several of the WorkSafe meetings held here in Quesnel and it has been brought up but nothing happens. This program seems like just more paperwork and expense but things aren't changing. The guys are out there fighting the muddy roads calling for gravel and it's not coming. Does this mean when there is ice they won't get sand. Hopefully the mills are being checked up on for their performance too.

Thank you for your attention

- Cliff

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