BC **Forest Safety** Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

FOREST INDUSTRY SAFETY ALERT

Serious Incident - Tree Impales Snowmobiler

Location: Myra Canyon (Kelowna area)

Date of Incident: Jan. 27, 2008

Details of Incident: (as re-printed from news article - link below)

Jamie Needham of Kelowna and his friends had been snowmobiling in the Myra Canyon area Sunday and were headed home and came upon an unforgettable sight -- a small tree sticking through a man.

"It was almost like a joust, like a long tree that was sticking into the trail. It was harsh. The tree went right through his mid section and broke off. It was hanging on both sides and there was no blood."

Needham says the man, who was with at least three other snowmobilers, was conscious and speaking.

"He was just lying there in a lot of pain."

Rescue crews were called including a helicopter, but it couldn't land, so Needham and the other snowmobilers began ferrying up paramedics. "I knew by the paramedic's face that he wanted to say: Oh my God!"

He says getting the man off the trail and into an ambulance required some ingenuity.

"There was no way we could put him on a bumpy snowmobile trail because the pain would have been too much."

Needham says they managed to get a pick-up truck up the snowy trail and load the patient in the back of the vehicle.

The man is recovering at KGH. Friends say the tree did not hit any vital organs.

"I really hope he pulls through and has a healthy recovery. It makes you think how vulnerable we really are."

(Story by Kelly Hayes (http://www.castanet.net/edition/news-story-36907-1-.htm))

Recommended Preventative Actions:

- When riding a snowmobile, ride slowly and cautiously enough to be able to continuously assess oncoming hazards (such as the impaling tree in this case); even when riding in non-wooded areas such as cutblocks, items such as logging debris or blowdown may present a potential hazard.

- Ensure that you have an adequate sign-out procedure actively in place and that you also have a means of communication so you can notify your designated contact in the event of an incident.