BC **Forest Safety** Council

Crew Transport

Safety Alert Type:
Crew Transport

Location: Km 22.5 Eakin Creek FSR (coming from Highway 24) Little Fort, BC

Date of Incident: 2008-06-13
Time of Incident: 7:30 pm

Details of Incident:

The following incident occurred on a tree-planting project. The description is based on the interviews with all five occupants of the vehicle, conducted on June 13, 2008 between 2:20 pm and 6:30 pm.

On the morning of June 13 there were five people traveling to work in a 2008 Dodge, 1-ton crew cab with a tree canopy. The crew boss was driving. All 5 occupants of the vehicle were wearing their seatbelts. The truck box and tree canopy contained only a few partial boxes of trees (approximately 300 total), fire equipment (2 packs, 3 shovels, 2 Pulaski, a spill kit, planter's bags and personal gear.

The crew had been travelling on the same route to access their planting blocks for the previous 3 days. The truck left the pavement and turned down Eakin Creek FSR in two-wheel drive. The driver called "Down Eakin at 24 km" and then proceeded down Eakin. It was raining considerably at the time (high setting on windshield wipers). Occupants report that the vehicle was travelling between 30 and 50 km/hr and there was normal everyday conversation while listening to satellite radio. As the crew cab approached the first bend in the road the truck slid out and the driver felt a loss of control of the vehicle as it slid to the right side of the road. The driver reports that he began tapping the brakes to try to regain control and then feeling the truck continuing to slide toward the ditch. The truck nearly came to a stop and then rolled over an embankment (approximately 3-4 metres) towards Eakin Creek, landing upside down. The air bags were not employed. All occupants were able to unbuckle their seatbelts and exit the vehicle safely. The driver checked the vehicle for possible fuel leaks and found none. The workers were found by a passing road crew and transported to a nearby fishing resort. From there, the driver called the owner of the company, via satellite phone to report the incident at approximately 8:00 am.

No serious injuries were sustained and all 5 workers returned to work the following day.

Statement of Causes:

- The road is narrow on this bend with no ditch and a narrow shoulder that drops off towards the creek. In order to anticipate oncoming traffic the tendency is to stay slightly wide to the right. The road has a slight lean towards the creek at this point (to the right).
- Due to the rain, the non-compacted edge of the road was more slippery than usual.
- A swab substance test was conducted with the driver. The results were negative.
- Driver and crew ruled out fatigue as a factor.
- Based on interviews there were no distractions to the driver at the time.
- Interviews with the vehicle occupants state that the vehicle was travelling at a safe speed prior to the incident (50km/hr maximum). The driver is in his second season as management on the project and has up-to-date driver training and familiarity with the roads in the area. A review of written Mid-Season

Planter Reviews shows positive feedback on the driver's safe driving habits.

Root Cause:

- Slippery conditions / Upset or changed conditions
- Not using 4-wheel drive as a preventative tool.
- One can always drive slower when conditions change.

Recommended Preventative Actions:

The Company held a Safety Meeting, with the camp involved on Saturday, June 14th at 7:00 am. The following topics were discussed with the camp:

- "Seat belts minimized the injuries to the workers and possibly saved their lives."
- A reminder to remain diligent about seat belt use in all company vehicles at all times.
- "Safe Start" review (Mental safety tool to check your state of mind while at work)
- R.A.D.A.R. review (Mental safety tool to recognize and adapt safely to changing conditions)
- All company drivers reminded to adjust speed according to conditions—I.E. rain, wet roads.
- All company drivers reminded to use 4-wheel drive when experiencing wet road conditions
- Safety Alert was sent to all Company Management and Safety Officers and to The BC Forest Safety Council.

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