BC **Forest Safety** Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

FOREST INDUSTRY SAFETY ALERT

Close Call/Serious Incident

Location: Squamish River

Date of Incident: June 11, 2009

Details of Incident:
On Thursday June 11, a 4-man crew was marking retention trees within heli-blocks in the Squamish River. The weather had been dry for the last few weeks and a lightning storm had occurred during the evening of July 10. At about 10:30am the crew received a radio call from the helicopter on the Infinity-Pacific radio frequency. A small fire was burning approximately 1 km to the North of the crews location. The crew was picked up at the heli pad approximately 15 minutes later and returned to the airport.

The crew did not return to the area until Monday June 15, after they had confirmation that the fire had been put out.

Recommended Preventative Actions:

1. **Communicaton:**
   Infinity-Pacific conducts a crew/contractor pre-work prior to starting any new project. Communication options are identified as part of the pre-work, and radios are programmed appropriately. In this instance, both field crew/helicopter had four methods of communication:
   - i. **Cell phone** – Crew working maps have the helicopter office phone number printed on them, and the helicopter company had the crew cell phone numbers
   - ii. **Radio Frequencies** – The helicopter company had the Infinity-Pacific operating frequency programmed in their machine, and Infinity-Pacific crew had the helicopter company repeater programmed in their portable radios. In addition, a radio check is performed when the helicopter drops the field crew at the heli-pad
   - iii. **MoF Repeater** – The relevant repeater color was identified for this area during the prework, and crews confirmed they could trigger the repeater when in the field

In this instance, the communication system worked well, as the helicopter was able to reach the crew and safely remove them from the area

2. **Monitor Weather/Fire Danger Rating**
    i. The safety coordinator will monitor the weather forecasts in the crew operating areas, and communicate extreme weather forecasts, such as lightning storms, to the field crews.
    ii. The safety coordinator will monitor the Fire Danger Class for the crew operating areas, and communicate high/extreme danger ratings to field crews. The Fire Danger Class site can be found online at the following link:

    http://bcwildfire.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=2

    iii. Field crews are to be alert and exercise caution when working in during the fire season, and shall leave the area if they observe signs of fire in their operating area.

3. **Wildfire Reporting**
    i. Portable radios have both MoF Repeaters and Fire Frequencies programmed in them, so crews can immediately report a wildfire.
    ii. In addition, field crews have both truck safety binders with emergency contacts and emergency contact field cards when they are working in areas of cell phone coverage

For more information, please call:

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