

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

January 2013

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

Snowmobile Safety

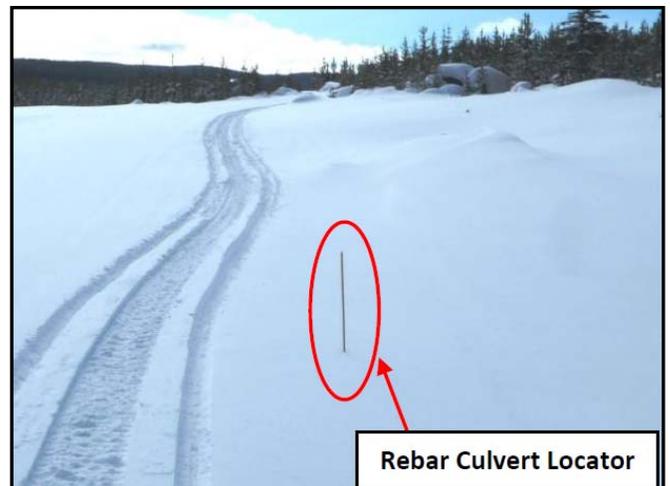
Jim and Doug had been working in this valley for about a month. They snowmobiled into the site regularly and had it down. But now there was a new guy with them and they had to get him up to speed.

Both Jim and Doug had coached new workers before and knew what they had to teach this worker about the job and the hazards. More importantly, they had to show him *what* to do and *where* the hazards were.

All three were well prepared for the work. They had the right machines for deep snow and mountainous terrain. They all had taken snowmobile safety training and their boss confirmed they had the skills to handle this type of riding.

However, Jim and Doug knew that this valley had specific hazards, which they identified and assessed when they started the project:

- Tree wells were everywhere. The crew gave them a wide berth and were trained on how to escape them.
- Rebar was used to mark culverts – easy to miss those in the snow. Slowing down and marking them with ribbon reduced the hazard.
- They always worked in pairs with a machine for each of them. It is a long ride to a remote work area. If they have a breakdown, they at least had one sled to get them out.
- Hypothermia is possible. If you keep moving - you'll stay warm. But what happens if you sprain your ankle, can't move and start to get cold? Survival gear was packed and carried on each snowmobile.
- Stay away from the lake. It's frozen and looks inviting but springs create areas of thin ice that can't be seen.



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- This is avalanche terrain. Beacons, shovels, probes and the training to use them are a must. When there is considerable avalanche hazard or higher, they work at a different location.
- Communication is limited in the steep valley. No cell phone or radio coverage but the satellite phone works well and is always with them.
- The terrain can get very difficult with the steep slopes and stream gullies. They all knew not to push it and when to stop and start walking to their location.
- Loading and unloading can be hazardous activities. Their protective gear is always on - especially at these times.

Additional Resources:

1) Link to our Snowmobile Safety Webinar:

<https://bcforestsafewebex.com/bcforestsafe/ldr.php?AT=pb&SP=MC&rID=31268232&rKey=39e3f3e8bc616877>

2) Tree Well Safety Alert:

http://www.bcforestsafewebex.com/bcforestsafe/AOM_February_2012

3) Canadian Avalanche Centre Forecasts:

<http://www.avalanche.ca/cac/bulletins/latest>

4) Great tools for getting unstuck:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkuEYmKX2BE>

5) Safe Riders – Snowmobile Safety Awareness Program:

http://www.snowmobilers.org/saferider/homepage/page_00.html

