

Professional Practice and Construction Initiated Slides

Road construction in the forest industry is often necessary to access old growth and second growth forests where older roads are upgraded. The Construction Initiated Slides Working Group (CISWG) would like to raise awareness to workers, contractors, and licensees that construction initiated slides are not constrained to specific geographic areas or site conditions. In fact, construction initiated slides occur year round under all weather conditions and on steep to gentle slopes down to 30% or less in many areas of BC.

Between 2012 and 2015, there were 36 construction initiated slides recorded on the coast of BC. The financial, environmental and most importantly, human cost can be significant not only to those physically injured, but also for anyone who has been on site during a slide.

Employers and tenure holders on the land base engage forest professionals, professional engineers and geoscientists as qualified professionals to provide advice on hazards, consequences and risks associated with road construction activities. These professionals will identify hazards and indicate works which may be undertaken by construction crews to reduce the risk to workers, the public and to protect the environment.

Qualified professionals have a duty to follow the established standard of care identified in all professional practice guidelines for the forest sector. The guidelines may be found at either <https://www.apeg.bc.ca/For-Members/Professional-Practice/Professional-Practice-Guidelines> or <http://member.abcfp.ca/WEB/ABC FP/Practising in BC/Practising in BC.aspx#guidelines>

In December 2015, WorkSafeBC indicated the professional practice guidelines established by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientist (APEGBC) and the Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABC FP) as being the accepted standard for landslide risk assessments (WorkSafe BC Guideline G26.18).

Those working in planning, designing and building road will want to familiarize themselves with WorkSafe OHS Regulations for Excavations (20.78-20.101), Planning and Conducting a Forestry Operation (26.2) and Creating Additional Hazards (26.80) at a minimum. These will guide the various assessments, prescriptions and direction needed for road construction activities to help eliminate the occurrence of landslides associated with road construction.

CISWG has developed a road construction initiated slide awareness presentation for workers involved in road planning, design and construction. The presentation and webinar may be found at the following link: <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2713>.

About the Author: The Construction Initiated Slides Working Group (CISWG) was formed in late 2014 via the Coast Harvesting Advisory Group to address a trend in logging road construction initiated landslides on the coast.

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