

# Seasoned drivers benefit from refresher driver training too, come rain, snow or shine!

For many forestry workers, driving on resource roads is second nature – coping with the unexpected, shifting road surfaces, tight corners, narrow passes, and often less than ideal conditions. So it may come as some surprise that even when these seasoned drivers head off to a driving course, they are genuinely pleased at the benefits they take away.

“I think all drivers become comfortable with their driving habits – both good and bad – and we become accustomed to responding in our usual way. Taking a driving course forces you to step out of your comfortable driving routines and really think about new and possibly better ways to do things. It also gives you the opportunity to further improve on good skills and performance,” said BC Forest Safety Advisor, Stacey Sproule.

“For me personally, the braking training really hit home. I know all the theory of how to react and handle a large, loaded log truck in difficult situations, but putting it into practice, being talked through changing conditions and possible responses and consequences by experts, is something you can’t get outside of refresher hands-on training,” she said.

A few things to always consider so that you are prepared to respond to whatever challenges you might face on resource roads include:

1. Preparation and planning: never cut back on planning the day before.



### Know

where you are going, complete your pre-trip inspection, and make sure you are well rested, have all your snacks and fluids ready to go, along with where you plan to stop safely, take a break and stretch your legs.

2. Driving position and posture: make sure that you are in the optimal position to be ready to respond to any eventuality.
3. Minimize distractions: keep the cab of your vehicle tidy, secure loose items, and keep your focus on the road ahead – not just 3 to 5 seconds ahead, but 12 seconds or more, learning to constantly better anticipate potential consequences by giving your eyes and brain more time to decode visual cues up ahead.
4. Steering technique: Standard airbags in many vehicles mean hand over hand steering can now result in serious face and body injuries. Learn how to implement safer, more controlled push-pull steering techniques.

5. Self-checks and the right attitude: If your mind wanders or you don’t remember the last kilometre, find the next safe spot to stop, pull-over and take a break. Walk. Stretch. Relax. And, remember driving is a responsibility that is only well-served with the right attitude – patience, courtesy, alertness and good common sense.
6. Drive to the road and weather conditions. For poor weather always allow yourself much larger and longer stopping distances, and always reduce speed.

You hold the keys. Use them when you know you’re ready. Drive safe. You have a family, friends and colleagues that care that you arrive, alive.

This is one of a series of Spotlight on safety columns produced for the Woodland Almanac by the BC Forest Safety Council. If you have a suggestion or would like to see a particular safety topic covered, please let us know. BSFSC has a team of safety advisors with more than 100 years of combined forestry and safety experience to provide trusted guidance and advice in all safety matters. Email [safetyadvisors@bcforestsafe.org](mailto:safetyadvisors@bcforestsafe.org) or call toll-free: 1-877-741-1060. The BCFSC is here to support industry achieve excellence in health and safety for all forest operations and their workers. ♦

## Purpose of the WPDC

The primary purpose of the WPDC is to ensure that levy fees are spent on woodlot licensee priorities to benefit and promote the woodlot industry throughout BC. Funds are collected through powers granted to Council under the Farming and Fishing Industries Development Act. ♦