



TAG

SAFETY ALERT

Winch Assist Buncher Flops Over on Rock Bluff

Description of the Event:

A buncher was hooked up to winch assist machine and the operator was bunching his way down the cutblock. The area had some very steep ground and rock bluffs (70%+ slopes) and was on the edge of the designated hand fall zone.

The operator attempted to navigate between two rock outcrops when one track dropped in a hole while the other stayed up on the ridge.

The buncher fell off the rock cliff landing on the boom and cab with one track in the air. The winch held and there were no injuries to operator.

Extracting the machine was very difficult and the crew went into “*do whatever it takes mode*” disregarding proper procedures and increasing the risk of another safety or environmental incident.

Contributing Factors

- Area was on the edge of hand fall section.
- Steep slope plan is not digital so not able to follow exactly where you are on iPad.
- Unknown as to how well the operator understood how to read maps or locate exactly where they are on the map.
- Machine **NO-GO** zones were not marked or ribboned in the field.



Suggested Actions

- Ensure steep slope plans and **NO-GO** zones are clearly identified and understood on map and in the field (walk with operator).
- Use an editable PDF to create digital steep slope plan maps so operators can follow exactly where they are on map.
- Ensure operators demonstrate an ability to read and understand the map and steep slope plan.
- Hand fall areas should be felled first before bunching.
- Develop the ability to respond, not react, in an emergency by practicing caution, taking the time to develop a good plan, reviewing the plan with another experienced supervisor and following it.



BC Forest Safety

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