



INDUSTRY

# SAFETY ALERT

## Hazards of Snowshoeing in Steep Terrain

February 2023

**Details of incident:** A two-person forestry crew used a snow machine to travel up steep terrain in the South Okanagan. The workers then attempted to snowshoe up a steep hill ranging from 60-80% to reach the work area. The snow was hard packed with ice forming on top.

The workers made the decision to turn around but on the way down the slope, one of them fell and then slid down the mountainside at a high rate of speed (for approximately 23 metres) before hitting a shrub which stopped their descent.

The worker's snowshoe got caught in the shrub which twisted their ankle, while their jacket and shirt were forced up resulting in their side being scraped up during the slide.

### Recommended Preventative Actions, Awareness, Learnings, and Suggestions:

- In icy conditions and with slopes that can lead to sliding (commonly accepted to be +/-20%), you are risk of injury. Without specific training and tools, a slip on hard/icy snow can result in an uncontrolled fall.
- It is important for each individual to gauge their experience and skills in navigating steep terrain. Workers should ensure they have the proper tools and equipment to minimize the potential of an incident.
- If an individual is encountering difficulties navigating the terrain and conditions, reassess the access and regress to ensure the crew is as safe as practicable.

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BC Forest Safety

Unit 8C - 2220 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, BC, V9S 1H9  
Toll Free: 1.877.741.1060 | [bcforestsafe.org](http://bcforestsafe.org)



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Photos taken from different angles show the slope steepness of area where incident occurred.



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