



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

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Vehicle Recovery

AOM: 2025-05-22

Recovering a stuck vehicle is a fairly common task for forestry operations but some companies are not adequately equipped or fully prepared for these situations. There are considerable risks with extracting a stuck vehicle. The forces involved can overload the equipment or cause structural failure at the vehicle attachment points. Read the following tips on the recovery of light and medium duty trucks and consider implementing them to improve the safety of your next vehicle recovery.

Vehicle Recovery Safety:

- 1) **Preparation** – Develop safe work procedures (SWP) and practice using them. Do some research and get the correct equipment for each vehicle. Incorporate the manufacturer's instructions into the SWPs. It will be necessary to collect information like the Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) for all your trucks plus the Working Load Limit (WLL) for the cables, straps, ropes and vehicle tow points that you might use for recovery. Consider taking a specific vehicle recovery training course, like the one offered by Tirion Safety - [Tirion Safety Ltd - Services](#)
- 2) **Risk Assessment** – If you are driving a vehicle that gets stuck, it's important to slow down and calmly assess the situation. Take time to assess the risks and determine if they can be adequately and safely managed. Think about what could unexpectedly move, shift or roll and how to control that. The best choice may be to call a towing professional to bring a tow truck to the site, especially when there is a risk of a roll over.
- 3) **Upset Condition** - Rushing to get yourself out or getting angry is ultimately going to make things worse. Getting stuck is always an upset condition (not just for you), which means there is an increased chance of someone getting injured or worse. Always communicate with others about your situation and request help.
- 4) **Unique hazards** – Assess the risks associated with the following hazards: poor footing (especially with mud, ruts, snow or ice), winch cable/tow rope/attachment points breaking, muscle strains, crushed between vehicles, caught underneath vehicles and roadside traffic.
- 5) **Choose the safest option** – There are many tool choices that can be used to effectively get a vehicle unstuck. Ensure workers are trained and familiar with their safe operation. Options include:



- **Tow Straps or Ropes** – These are designed to be elastic and will stretch during a recovery. Do not use chains or ropes with metal hooks as serious injuries and fatalities have occurred when the hardware has broken. These broken pieces can become projectiles which can easily go through a windshield. Reduce the energy of a broken strap by draping a damper blanket over it before the pull.
 - **Winches** – Winches are designed for a slow and steady pull. Winch cables can still break and must be carefully inspected and repaired or replaced if damaged.
 - **Jacks** - Jacks can be useful when the vehicle is high centred. Beware of hi-lift jacks (also called jackalls or farm jacks) as they have been the cause of many injuries.
 - **Shovels** – You can use a shovel to dig a vehicle out. But remember, muscle and back strains can often result from shovelling.
- 6) Good visibility and communication** – Those involved in the vehicle recovery need to be wearing high visibility clothing, especially when there is other vehicle traffic. Good communication is essential; everyone involved with the recovery needs to know the plan and communicate throughout the process. Warning triangles or cones help other road users know you're working on the side of the road.
- 7) Inspect vehicle** – Inspect the vehicle for damage after it's freed - especially underneath where something might have torn loose.



Resources:

- 1) [Vehicle Recovery Guideline and Infographic – Energy Safety Canada](#)
- 2) [Fatality Alert - Vehicle Towing](#)
- 3) [Lock Out Resource Package](#)
- 4) [Working Under Vehicles Resources](#)

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BCFSC Latest News & Resources

New Course – Virtual Instructor Led Basic Incident Investigation – The regular Basic Incident Investigation training is also available as a requested instructor-led virtual course which is convenient for companies with employees located around the province. It includes a combination of instructor-led virtual meetings and learning activities through BCFSC's online Learning Centre. The training is scheduled as two half-day sessions to provide flexibility for participants who are actively working.

Forest Safety News – read the latest issue of the FSN

FIRS App – The full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies and COR audit forms management.

BCFSC Training:

October 6 - 9 | Falling Supervisor – Nelson

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

October 9 - 10 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 15 - 16 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Cranbrook

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 16 - 17 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 17 | Basic Incident Investigation – Cranbrook

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

October 23 - 24 | Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Prince George

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 23 - 24 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Nelson

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Refer to the [Training section](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.

Worker Assessment and Training

Each forestry occupation requires different knowledge and skillsets to perform the job at hand. BCFSC worked with industry to develop competency-based standards, training, and assessment tools to help employers evaluate workers and complete on-the-job training.

Take a look at our [FREE assessment forms](#) for Basic Forest Workers, Yarding, Mechanized Harvesting and Road Building.