

ROAD DEACTIVATION SURVEY

Results Summary – April 5, 2023

On **March 11, 2023**, the BC SAFE Forestry Program conducted a survey to assess the frequency and extent of access hazards that silviculture contractors face in their worksites due to road deactivation, rehabilitation, or closure after harvesting. The survey aimed to make recommendations to reduce these hazards, improve safety and productivity for silviculture crews, and cover access conditions over the last five years. The survey's scope covered all access conditions, except for helicopter access, and respondents were encouraged to participate regardless of their experience with these hazards. The following presents a summary of the survey results gathered from **58 respondents**:

SCOPE:

Among the 58 survey respondents, 51.72% were managers, 29.31% were crew supervisors, 8.62% were workers, and 10.34% specified as "Other". Over the last five years, 94.74% of the respondents reported that their crews had worked on worksites where access had been treated after the harvest, subsequently preventing safe and ready access for their crews, equipment, and supplies. This is now referred to as “The Work Site Situation”.

Worker	8.62%
Crew Supervisor	29.31%
Manager	51.72%
Other (please specify)	10.34%

THE WORK SITE SITUATION:

- **QUANTITY**
Out of **38 respondents**, answers ranged from **10 to 5000 work sites**, with many respondents estimating having worked at **several hundred or even thousands of work sites**. Several respondents expressed difficulty estimating the exact number, with some citing the lack of access and the diversity of contracts as complicating factors. The majority of the respondents (61.11%) reported an increase in access hazards over the last five years, while only one respondent (2.78%) reported a decrease. The remaining 36.11% of respondents reported that access hazards had stayed the same.
- **FREQUENCY**
Out of **36 respondents**, the extent of access hazards for silviculture contractors is considerable. Most respondents reported encountering access hazards regularly, with estimates ranging from **15% to 100% of sites worked**. The majority of respondents reported encountering access hazards over **60% of the time**, with some reporting as high as 100%. Several respondents expressed frustration with the safety of reclaimed roads, with some describing them as significantly dangerous and unsuitable for use, despite being marked as accessible.

- DURATION OF EXPOSURE

Out of **35 respondents**, answers ranged from **as little as 10 minutes to as much as 150 workdays per season**. Many respondents found this question difficult to answer, citing the variability of factors such as block size, terrain, and access conditions. Some respondents provided estimates in terms of days, with answers ranging from **1 to 30 days per worksite**. Other respondents provided estimates in terms of hours or minutes, with answers ranging from **0.2 to 8 hours per day** spent on the worksite.

- REGION

Out of **34 respondents**, the **majority (50%) reported working in Cariboo**, followed closely by **Thompson Okanagan (52.94%)**.

Alberta	44.12%	15
Skeena	23.53%	8
Omineca	23.53%	8
Northeast	11.76%	4
Northwest	17.65%	6
West Coast	35.29%	12
Cariboo	50.00%	17
Thompson Okanagan	52.94%	18
Kootenay Boundary	32.35%	11

- CLIENTS

Out of **36 respondents**, **52.78%** reported working for a **licensee**, although they did not specify which one(s). 27.78% reported working for BCTS, 13.89% for MoF, and 5.56% specified "Other." No respondents reported working for the Alberta Government.

BCTS	27.78%	10
MoF	13.89%	5
Alberta Government	0.00%	0
Other	5.56%	2
Licensee (Please specify which licensee(s) you were working for)	52.78%	19

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING – Question Based Findings

SCOPE:

The survey respondents provided a range of emergency response planning measures taken to ensure timely and safe emergency transportation, including providing radios to every worker, air transport arrangements for injured workers, modifying the worksite, bringing in extra first aid resources, refusing unsafe work, and having personal first aid kits on everyone. Many respondents mentioned having ERP in place that consider access and plan for air evac if necessary. Some also coordinated with local heli companies or used satellite phones or mobile carrying devices in case of emergency. A few respondents mentioned experiencing difficulties in arranging air transport or not having a clear plan in place.

1. Did you have injuries, damage, or near misses involving crews and vehicles while operating in the kinds of access conditions this survey is concerned with?
OF RESPONDENTS: 36
Answered YES: 86.11%
Answered NO: 13.89%
2. Were the access problems known to you prior to arriving for work on the block e.g., where they described in the viewing package?
OF RESPONDENTS: 36
Answered YES: 38.89%
Answered NO: 61.11%
3. Did the access conditions change between viewing and commencing work?
OF RESPONDENTS: 34
Answered YES: 52.94%
Answered NO: 47.06%
4. Do you consider these access situations you have encountered a hazard to your workers?
OF RESPONDENTS: 36
Answered YES: 94.44%
Answered NO: 5.56%
5. Do you consider solving these access problems a good use of your resources?
OF RESPONDENTS: 36
Answered YES: 61.11%
Answered NO: 38.89%
6. Do you think these access problems could have been avoided by different planning on the part of your clients?
OF RESPONDENTS: 36
Answered YES: 91.67%
Answered NO: 8.33%

7. Do you think these access problems reflect favourably on your clients' approach to providing safe working conditions for your crews?

OF RESPONDENTS: 36

Answered YES: 17.14%

Answered NO: 82.86%

The survey responses highlight that access to planting sites continues to be a significant issue, with many workers reporting injuries due to dangerous access. Clients are often not providing accurate information about access and not taking responsibility for leaving roads into the block. Many workers feel that quad access is an afterthought, and that more consideration needs to be given to making access safe for all workers, including accurate information about the condition of quad trails and repercussions for clients if the information is inaccurate. Some respondents suggest that the government should be responsible for guaranteeing helicopter availability if access is blocked. Additionally, some respondents noted the negative impact of access on wildlife habitat and the need for better communication and accountability from clients. It is clear that a more comprehensive approach to access management is needed in the industry.