



INSPECTIONS REVEAL CONTINUED COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Thorough inspections and maintenance of log trucks and trailers are essential for safe operations. Even the smallest malfunction can have the gravest of consequences.

In August 2018, this was demonstrated tragically when a loaded logging truck entered a corner on a forest service road in the Cranbrook area.

The log load spilled off the vehicle, pulling the truck over onto its left side. The driver was trapped in the cab of the truck and sustained fatal injuries. Damaged bolster bolts were found on the rear bunk, which may have affected their integrity and contributed to the spill.

Forestry High-risk Strategy

WorkSafeBC's High Risk Strategies identify and target industries and employers with a high risk of serious workplace injury

and a significant contribution to the serious injury rate, including the forestry sector.

As part of WorkSafeBC's forestry strategy, log transportation was identified as one of the five high-risk work activities (the others being manual tree falling, cable yarding, mechanized harvesting and silviculture).

With respect to log transportation, our main areas of focus are:

- Driving and road assessment
- Loading, offloading, and securing of load
- Best practices for maintenance work (lockout, access, and egress)
- Cab guards (bullboards) and seat belt use
- Three-point-contact procedures

Inspections

WorkSafeBC regularly carries out logging truck inspections across BC wherever there are forestry activities taking place, such as mill yards, chain-up areas, weigh-scale stations and at logging sites and roads.

In addition, at least annually we conduct a one-day inspection initiative in various parts of the province.

In October last year, we conducted one of these types of inspections in the southeastern part of BC. It included inspections of 26 log transporters. Of those, 10 had no compliance issues. However, of the remaining 16, non-compliance with occupational health and safety requirements resulted in WorkSafeBC issuing 26 compliance orders and seven stop-use orders.

That worked out to be just 38 per cent of the trucks in compliance, and



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an average of 1.6 orders per truck with compliance issues. That compares to the 2018 results, which recorded only 19 per cent of trucks in compliance and an average of 2.4 orders per truck with compliance issues.

The 2018 and 2019 orders found a number of compliance issues, including:

- Brake air line damage—this could result in loss of braking capability.
- Loose bunk bolts—if the bunk bolts were to shear off, it could result in the load spilling out.
- Tail frame cracks—this affects the integrity and could lead to failure.
- Improperly modified cinch handles—some cinch handles had hooks welded onto the handles, which could damage a handle's integrity and make it snap causing injury to the operator.
- Molly damage and wear and tear—frayed cables could lead to failure while a trailer is being unloaded or loaded onto the truck.
- Unsecured tools in the cabs—loose items, such as tools, thermoses, batteries, etc., could cause significant

injuries if they strike a driver in the event of an incident.

- Unmaintained or bent stakes—worn or damaged stakes could snap or collapse, which could result in the loss of a load.
- Recording of inspections—operators are required to carry out pre-trip inspections and record the results, including defaults. In some cases, no recording of inspections were found.

Over the course of 2019, as part of our province-wide log transporter inspections, WorkSafeBC inspected 534 vehicles, issued 529 orders and 14 stop-use orders. Most of the infractions mirrored what we found during that one-day inspection initiative in October.

Truck owners and operators have a responsibility to ensure their log transporters are maintained. While there was some improvement in the year-over-year results, we are still seeing far too many non-compliance issues that could result in catastrophic and deadly consequences.

In 2020, we will continue to look for these non-compliance issues, with an

additional focus on seat belt use and recording of inspections.

Seat belts must be worn in all vehicles on all roads, including resource roads, at all times.

The safety benefits far outweigh any perceived benefits of not wearing one, and evidence from log truck accident investigations clearly speaks against the argument for needing to jump from the truck or hit the deck if the load comes forward. We know of numerous tragic consequences that resulted from this line of thinking.

As for pre-trip inspections, they are required and must be documented before the operator can begin work. The inspection checklist can be found on worksafebc.com by typing “log transporter inspection checklist” in the search bar.

By ensuring compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, log truck operators may save lives.▲

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