

# Speed and Logging Access Roads Don't Go Together

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To help TPA members avoid accidents resulting in injury or damage to property, the Timber Bulletin, in association with Lumbermen's Underwriting Alliance, will publish details of actual incidents and what can be done to avoid such occurrences in the future. By sharing this information, TPA and LUA hope to make our industry as safe as possible.

## Background:

This case study compiles information from personal interviews with the owner, the employees, and the review of the

damaged equipment. This large-sized logging and trucking company operates both conventional and cut-to-length logging

mobile equipment.

This loss occurred in mid-winter, and the weather was somewhat normal for the time of year with clear sunny skies. The gravel/mix roadway had spotty snow and was ice-covered, and the job site was located approximately 30 to 45 minutes from the nearest town. This personal injury and property

loss took place on a remote logging road. The equipment involved in this serious collision accident included a pick-up and a loaded semi-truck and trailer.

## Operator:

Both vehicle drivers were seasoned drivers as they had worked several years with this company and had other driving experience before this incident. Also, both of these individuals were considered fully trained for their job duties as a forwarder operator and a logging truck driver.

## Accident and/or Injury:

Just before this serious emergency, the logging equipment operator was leaving the logging site for the day when he remembered something back at the log landing. This individual turned around and was hurrying back to the log landing to stay on track for the remainder of the day's activities. At this same time, a loaded log truck was also leaving the logging site on this roadway. As these two vehicles neared each other, the truck driver saw the pick-up rapidly approaching on the logging road and veered to the right to give the road to the other vehicle. When the pick-up driver saw the loaded truck, it was too late to avoid the collision, and he slid into the loaded truck. The pick-

up driver sustained very serious injuries (pelvic, ribs, head, and bruising) and considerable vehicle damage occurred to both units. The log truck driver was not injured.

## Unsafe Act and/or Condition:

The unsafe conditions may have involved the slippery roads and poor visibility while driving into the setting sun. The unsafe act may have been the excess speed of the smaller vehicle. Some contributing factors were: driver's focus on the task at hand, awareness of others on the roadway, and communication with the other road users. The following suggestions may help prevent problems of this nature while traveling on low maintenance logging roadways.

## Preventative Measures:

1. Always travel at a safe speed for the design of the roadways (improved, limited maintenance, etc.). Tough driving conditions may occur, such as hilly terrain, curves, limited visibility, wildlife or animals on the roadway, etc.
2. Stay aware of severe weather conditions that may occur when traveling in motor vehicles. Considerations such as wet, icy, slippery, and poor visibility (fog, rain, snow, traveling into the sun, etc.) are all factors.
3. Stay focused on the job at hand and don't let your planning get



The side view of the damaged pick-up.



The front view of the damaged pick-up.



The side view of the damaged truck and trailer.



The front view of the damaged truck and trailer.

yourself ahead of the current task. Sometimes you have to slow down to go faster!

4. On limited roadways, practice good communication with all road users. Utilize cell phones, two-way radios, and/or personally stop and talk to other road users to inform them of your situation and have them spread the word to other road users if they have the ability.
5. Post road signs to notify all road users of logging and trucking activities in the area. Also, post road conditions for limited visibility, hilly, etc. to limit speed.
6. Implement an emergency response plan for all logging and trucking operations for both personal injury and property loss situations. All logging operations need to maintain an emergency call number list with directions to the logging site location (written directions to the logging job sites), and regular refresher training. Employees must also practice good communication. These are just some of the items that are very necessary. The panic factor is what you're preparing for in an emergency situation.