

February 6, 2013



Maine Industrial Logging Road SAFETY ALERT

BACKGROUND

In the last several years, those of us who travel Maine's private woods road system are seeing an increase in unsafe trucking and private vehicle operating practices. The problems are especially evident right now, during the height of the winter hauling season, both with regular haulers and with subcontractors who aren't as familiar with off-road wood hauling practices, as well as personal vehicles on the road system.

Unsafe loading and driving practices increase the risk of an accident resulting in serious injury or worse; impact business bottom lines with repair costs, lost production, and increased insurance rates; and last, but not least, increase the risk that the State of Maine will take steps to more heavily regulate trucking on private road system.

UNSAFE ACTS or CONDITIONS

include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive speed for conditions;
- Failure to properly utilize radio notification systems.
 - Failure to call out locations.
 - Personal chatter on CB's and MURS radios block those who try to call out mile marker locations.
 - Boosted MURS radios add confusion as to which road location trucks are on and can override non-boosted radios in closer range.
- Unsecured loads, straps or chains missing or not being used.
- Trucks loaded above the stakes.
- Trees, limbs, loose binder chains extending from the side of loads, endangering other vehicles.

RECOMMENDATIONS for CORRECTION

The entire wood supply system; loggers, loader operators, truckers, foresters and receiving mills needs to encourage a voluntary improvement in behavior and culture on our woods road system, both to assure personal safety and minimize the risk of regulation.

Maine's Industrial Road Safety Committee developed the Rules of the Road (pg. 2) in 2009, supported by many landowners and mills that depend on safe transportation on these roads.



Rules of the Road For Industrial Logging Roads

These rules apply to all road users.

- 1** Obey all posted speed limits and signs: **Maximum speed 45 MPH.**
- 2** Seat belt use mandatory for all operators.
- 3** Be prepared to stop at all checkpoints and reduce speed not to exceed 10 MPH.
- 4** Lights on for safety.
- 5** In areas of limited visibility always drive on the right side of the road and reduce speed.
- 6** All drivers must have a valid state or provincial driver's license.
- 7** All vehicles yield right of way to loaded trucks. All traffic yield to equipment operating in road, pass only after operator's acknowledgement.
- 8** For additional safety, drivers should use CB or MURS radios to call out mile markers and landmarks. **Be aware that communications systems are sometimes unreliable and are not a substitute for prudent driving.**
- 9** Drivers must be in control of their vehicles at all times.
- 10** All vehicles operating on logging roads must be in mechanically safe condition for the work that is being accomplished.
- 11** **Load weights must be within the safe design capacity of the truck.**
- 12** **All pieces of wood must be below the height of a minimum of two stakes.**
- 13** A minimum of two chains or straps must be used to secure each tier of wood. (tree length loads are required to have a minimum of three chains or straps).

**These are minimum standards on industrial logging roads.
Appropriate local, state and provincial laws apply to all other road systems.**

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assure the load is not over width. Crooked or improperly placed wood or limbs can stick outside of the width of the trailer.
- Add the road traveled when announcing yourself on the radio. Landmarks aren't always known by drivers unfamiliar with the area. Type of vehicle, mile marker, direction of travel, and road traveled would simplify for everyone. Ex: Empty lowboy coming in at mile 2 on the Pinkham Rd.
- The key is to drive defensively, not offensively, and to be accountable for your actions.

Please review these Rules of the Road and recommendations with your contractors and employees as soon as possible.

If any of the following organizations can assist, please contact us.

Forest Resources Association

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Professional Logging Contractors of Maine

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Maine Forest Products Council / Maine SFI

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Maine Motor Transport Association

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Maine Employers' Mutual Insurance Company

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Certified Logging Professional Program

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