

Hazard Alert

Head-on collision on single lane bridge

On a winter day in January 2021, a logging truck and pickup truck collided head-on on a single lane bridge on a forest access road. The driver of the pickup truck suffered a critical injury resulting in multiple fractures.

What happened?

1. Driver 1 of an empty log truck radioed they were 'heading in' on the forest access road at the 1-kilometre mark, noting other vehicles. In total, three vehicles were 'heading in' to the logging site. Pickup truck 'Driver 4' radioed at the same time to say they were 'heading out' at the 9-km mark, so all four drivers were in radio contact. The road had been sanded and the grader had passed through the area that morning.
2. Log truck Driver 2 said they passed pickup Driver 4 at the 6-km mark, warning the pickup was going so fast they almost collided.
3. As they came around a corner and approached a bridge, empty log truck Driver 1 spotted pickup Driver 4 coming down a hill on the opposite side of the bridge. Log truck Driver 1 tried to stop by pumping the breaks but realized they could not. Pickup Driver 4 also tried stopping but was unable to as the truck's back end slid side to side.
4. The two vehicles collided head-on on the bridge, with the log truck pushing the pickup truck back across the bridge to the other side. Log truck Driver 1 was not physically injured, but the pickup Driver 4 sustained a broken hip, broken ribs, and a broken sternum.



The log truck pushed the pickup truck back across the single lane bridge.

How could the incident have been prevented?

- All posted speed-limit signs on forest access roads and highways must be followed and enforced. Companies need to communicate and enforce their policy on speed limits to all drivers, with special emphasis on the importance of adjusting speed to road and weather conditions. Drivers must always be ready to safely share the road on short notice.
- Radio communication with other drivers is a useful tool on logging roads, but drivers must not rely only on their radio to determine if the road is clear of traffic. Other vehicles, including those driven by members of the public using the road for recreational purposes, may not be equipped with two-way radios. Even when a system of two-way radio communication is in place, a radio may malfunction, and communication may be interrupted.

Contact your WSN Health and Safety Specialist for more information