



Unsealed forest roads create dust hazards

INCIDENT

In poor visibility, a double-cab workers' transport vehicle that was following a logging unit was driven into the rear of the logging truck's trailer.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Four employees were travelling home from work in a double-cab vehicle. The vehicle drove towards a right-angle corner and the occupants could see the logging truck turning right into the other road. They followed the logging truck as it climbed the gradient. It is assumed that the logging truck slowed as it climbed and the driver of the double cab could not see the rear trailer as he had little or no clear vision of the road in front of him. The double cab hit the trailer and the two rear passengers were thrown forward, one suffering serious injury and the other bruising. Neither of the rear passengers was wearing a seatbelt.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation determined that the accident was caused by the driver continuing to drive without clear vision ahead.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

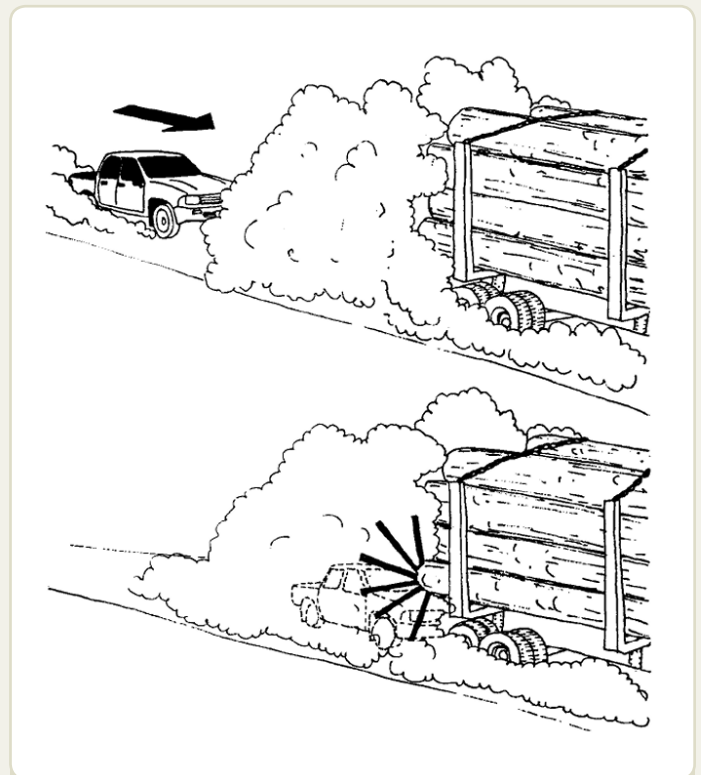
The hazards of driving on forest roads are increased by drivers not driving with due regard to road and weather conditions. Dust is a major hazard throughout the country and there have been a number of very serious accidents involving vehicles transporting workers and heavy vehicles, both laden and unladen.

All vehicles should be driven with due regard to road and weather conditions.

Passengers in work vehicles must wear seatbelts at all times. In this case, wearing of seatbelts would have prevented serious injury.

Follow these simple guidelines when driving vehicles in dusty conditions.

1. If a heavy vehicle is approaching you, slow down, pull well over until the vehicle has passed and the dust has subsided.
2. Do not follow closely in poor visibility. Travel at a distance that ensures you have ample visibility.
3. Do not pass in dusty conditions unless:
 - The other driver is aware of your presence, and/or
 - You have plenty of room and clear vision well ahead.



4. If it is not safe to pass, slow down or pull over. The few extra minutes may well avoid a serious accident or even a fatality.
5. Remember, if you are paid to drive the vehicle, you have responsibilities under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.

TO WHICH INDUSTRIES/SECTORS OR MATTERS WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT?

- Forestry
- Road Transport

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.