

Overtaken timber lorry Machine and environmental damage

A team of three timber lorries, two crane mounted lorries and one flat bed, entered a large forest complex at 18:30 hours on a winter evening. As they were loading up, heavy snow started to fall. The flat bed was loaded first and left the site, he reported back that the snow was worse on the hill on the way out. On hearing this, the first crane mounted lorry exited the forest with only the front bunk loaded to improve his traction. The third lorry had by now fully loaded. His initial plan was to stay in the forest overnight but he now became concerned that he may be unable to get out in the morning and also decided to leave. More snow had now fallen and the passage of the first two lorries may have compacted the snow on the road. He ran into difficulties while he was climbing up out of a small dip in the road. The lorry lost traction and began to slide to the right, the driver realised that there was nothing he could do to bring the lorry back into control, he braced himself, the lorry went off the edge of the road and overturned.



The driver of the first crane mounted lorry had waited at the forest entrance for the last driver; when he didn't arrive and he was unable to raise him on the fleet CB he drove back into the forest complex and found the wagon overturned.

The driver of the tipped lorry was understandably disorientated and had to be helped out of the cab via the top escape hatch. He had been wearing his seatbelt and sustained no injuries other than general soreness and shock.

The driver looked over the lorry, it appeared to be stable and offering no further risk. In the dark with snow still falling he was unable to see the watercourse. His main priority was to get the disoriented driver home. When he had exited the forest, he reported the incident to both the fleet manager and to Scottish Woodlands. On the evidence available the decision was taken to leave the timber lorry as was, until daylight.

The next morning the harvesting contractors were the first on the scene. They discovered that diesel had been leaking out through the breather hose and was running down the bank into a burn.

They immediately deployed their oil spill containment kits and blocked up the breather hose. They used the forwarder to layout some of the spilt timber to damn the watercourse, slowing the flow down to aid the clean-up. The Forestry Commission and Scottish Woodlands Managers also attended



and aided in the containment and clean up. The Company's oil spill containment specialist contractor was contacted and mobilised to site.

It was estimated that in the region of 50 litres of diesel may have been spilt. It was understood that most of this was recovered and no wider environmental damage occurred.

What can we look to learn?

Regularly check the weather forecasts for your proposed work area. If heavy snow is forecast, plan your runs accordingly. Snow showers can occur out with these times and will sometimes lie on a forest road overnight but can clear quickly as the temperature rises again the next day. If you are unsure of the safety of the road due to snow, don't enter the forest. If you are in the forest and are unsure of the road quality, check the forecast again. It may be safer to sit tight until it clears. At this location, the snow had cleared off the road by morning.

Positives

This team of hauliers had an effective and robust 'lone working' procedure. They were looking out for and staying in contact with each other. This is greatly to their credit.

Similarly, with the harvesting contractors who identified, contained and cleaned up the diesel spill and the Forestry Commission and Scottish Woodlands managers who also aided in this. Their prompt and thorough action prevented any wider environmental damage.

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