

# \$AFETY \$AVES

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*First and foremost*, let me begin by wishing you all a very Happy New Year! Hopefully, the holiday season was well spent with family and friends and this year will be a safe and prosperous one for all.

As for the winter logging season, it certainly has been a mild one so far...but who knows what the remainder of the season has in store... real winter weather could sneak up on us at anytime. So, as we begin a new year, let's take a few minutes and review a few key "winter" safety tips.

The limited snow cover may mean that ground conditions are frozen... so, for machines running on rubber, make sure tires have adequate chains and that they are good and tight. For track machines, make sure adequate ice grousers are in place.

Also of note, are road conditions... up in the Flathead, the snow arrived early, then it warmed up turning everything into ice, then it got real crazy when it rained... so, making sure all pickups also have a good set of tire chains will add reassurance for crew members.

Another situation we are encountering is operations doing more with less... for example, employees operating more than one piece of equipment during the day. This involves getting out on one machine and into another... climbing down, climbing up, climbing down, climbing up... you get the point. Keep equipment steps clear of ice and snow build-up, ensure hand holds are in place and that the three point system is utilized when getting into and out of each piece of equipment.

Yet another hazard to be keenly aware of during these winter months is dressing for the conditions. There was a time when operators had to dress for the conditions they were working in. Nowadays, due to the comfort of working in fully enclosed cabs, operators may not necessarily dress for extreme winter conditions. Understandably, conditions within the cab are quite comfortable, but machines do break down and it could be a miserable trek back to the landing without appropriate foot wear or outer wear.

Many machines/equipment have decks with serrated edges for traction. However, if these decks fill up with snow and ice, this built in safety device will do you no good. Try to maintain a clean and clear walkway for you and your employees.

Also, with all forms of logging, proper footwear that provides warmth, ankle support and adequate traction is a necessity. Remember slip/falls are a leading cause of accidents in the logging industry, especially during the winter season. Keep your equipment in proper working condition and reinforce with your employees the importance of extra caution when climbing into and out of equipment.

It's a New Year... stay focused on the importance of safety on and off the job... and let's make sure every member of every crew arrives home safely every day. Safety Saves!

NOTE: Just a heads up that spring workshops are merely a couple of months away. We will be starting classes in mid March and continuing through May. Keep an eye out for our annual registration packet in mid- February.