

Top 10 causes of distracted driving in Ontario logging operations

Devices take attention away from the task of driving

As identified by workers, supervisors, and employers in the Ontario logging industry through Ministry of Labour-facilitated risk assessment and root-cause analysis workshops in partnership with Workplace Safety North.



- 1. Electronic devices**
– phones, FM or two-way radios



- 6. Inability to measure impairment**
– e.g. drug tests



- 2. Fatigue**
– long work hours



- 7. Multi-tasking in the cab**
– using two-way radio, calling in mileage



- 3. Not appreciating distracting factors**
– become dulled to over time, poor road conditions



- 8. No clear policies**
– e.g. communication and reinforcement



- 4. Lack of contact with supervisor**
– isolated, independent work environment



- 9. Inexperienced commercial workers**
– contract or new drivers, new to bush roads



- 5. Substance use**
– alcohol, drugs



- 10. Not following rules willingly**
– speeding, load management

For a detailed list of critical controls you can put in place, read the technical paper: Root cause analysis report of distracted driving in Ontario logging operations.

For more information, please contact your WSN Health and Safety Specialist or visit workplacesafetynorth.ca



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Top prevention tools: Two-way communication, clear policies, and mental health support

Technical paper provides detailed list of critical controls you can put in place

What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving happens when a driver's attention is taken away from the driving task because they are focused on something else. They can be severely affected by speed, road conditions, or unexpected hazards; in the case of logging operations, this could be, for example:

- Texting
- Talking on the phone – hands-free or not
- Talking on two-way radio
- Looking up information on the phone
- Looking at social media on the phone
- Eating or drinking
- Using GPS navigation system

The risk of a collision goes up when a driver's eyes and attention are taken off the road. This is because distraction impairs performance and reduces a driver's awareness. It makes drivers slower to notice and less able to safely respond to critical events on the road. Or they may miss them entirely.

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Training for Supervisors

In partnership with CannAmm, this training program meets and exceeds the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements for supervisor drug and alcohol training. It is also highly recommended for non-DOT employers as it conforms to the Construction Owners Association of Alberta Canadian Model and industry standards for providing a safe workplace.

Intended audience: This course is suggested for managers, supervisors, or employees with responsibility for workplace safety.

Training Goal: This course will educate the participants on the basics of a fit-for-duty program, as well as training to recognize signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use and abuse, and offers approaches and required documentation for reasonable cause testing.

What to focus on immediately

Focus right away on the following five common mitigation actions to address current systemic weaknesses:

- Proper engagement of, and involvement of the worker and management on safety** (e.g. policy/guideline/training development, messaging). High practicality and quality in a two-way conversation with worker and management
- Availability of mental health training and support** (understanding “mental health first-aid”)
- Clear, concise, know-your-audience, practical and trustworthy policies** (purpose, implementation, execution, enforcement)
- Supervisors to embrace and enforce “safety first”**
- Supervisors to be approachable and proactive**

For a detailed list of critical controls you can put in place to help prevent distracted driving in the workplace, read the technical paper [Root cause analysis report of distracted driving in Ontario logging operations](#).

About Workplace Safety North

An independent not-for-profit, Workplace Safety North is one of four health and safety associations in Ontario, and the only one headquartered in the north.

WSN provides government-approved province-wide workplace health and safety services for mining and forest products sectors, as well as businesses and communities across northern Ontario.

With health and safety specialists located across the province, WSN and its legacy organizations have been helping make Ontario communities safer for more than 100 years. Businesses and communities call upon WSN for expert advice and training.

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