



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

## GROUND BASED HARVESTING GUIDELINES

*In the event of any discrepancy between these guidelines, contractual, legal, and regulatory requirements related to forest practices or safety, the contractual, legal, or regulatory requirements shall prevail.*

*This document provides guidelines for best management practices to be considered during ground-based harvesting activities.*



**Stop work, contact your project supervisor and BCTS representative if:**

- Hazardous material spill, uncontrolled fire, or erosion/landslide event.
- Uncertain about the project plan, the responsibilities, or the location of hazardous or sensitive areas.
- Previously unidentified resource feature, resource value or sensitive area is found (e.g., species at risk, bear den, wildlife habitat feature, culturally modified trees).
- Unfavourable weather or site conditions could cause environmental damage.
- Conditions have the potential for immediate environmental damage.
- There is reason to believe that the project plan will not work.

### **SAFETY FIRST (Identify Conditions and Machine Limitations)**

- As per **Section 26.2 of the Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Regulations**, forestry operations must be planned and conducted in a manner that is safe for all workers.
- Daily ground-based harvesting operations must be planned to ensure that hazards specific to ground based equipment on steep slopes are known and communicated to machine operators.

### **KNOW YOUR PLAN**

**Become familiar** with the Site Plan (SP), TSL document, and the Harvest Plan Map for each TSL area. All operators must carry and be familiar with the approved Harvest Plan Map for the block.

#### **Environment Management System (EMS) and Safe Companies Safety Program Pre-Work**

All persons conducting ground-based operations must have had a recent, thorough pre-work and must understand the plan and potential environmental impacts of their work.

# **GROUND-BASED OPERATIONS**

## **Tips for Operators on ways to minimize soil disturbance:**

- **Good Practices:**
  - Avoid funneling of traffic unless soil strength is high.
  - Minimize turning in the cutblock and at landings.
  - Avoid sharp turns when approaching the landing.
  - If soils are wet, reduce load size until conditions improve.
  - Travel at a lower speed and avoid rapid speed changes. This reduces bouncing and helps prevent soil compaction and the tearing of the forest floor.
  - Skid downhill wherever possible and avoid skidding across slopes.
  
- **Other tips for operating when soil strength is reduced:**
  - Skid as soon as possible after felling, to avoid watering-up of the site which will reduce the soil strength.
  - Skid low-lying areas first during dry weather. If rainfall reduces soil strength, move to higher ground until the area recovers.
  - Avoid skidding sensitive areas in the dark.
  - Switch to wide (low flotation) tires to reduce ground pressure and add chains to reduce tire slip.
  
- **Working Around Wetlands:**
  - Swales, drainage ways, seepages and organic pockets are often saturated year-round. Soil strength is typically low, and operating machines in these areas often results in excessive rutting.
  - Skid around and not through wetlands if possible.
  - Avoid sharp turns and dispersed skidding in or near wetlands. Disengage differential lock during turns.
  - Use brush mats or corduroy on trails with saturated/moist soils.
  
- **Designated Stream Crossings:**
  - Only cross at locations indicated on the map. Ensure that you know the location and make sure it is marked in the field.
  - Locate, construct, and use a temporary stream crossing in a manner that:
    - Protects the stream channel and stream bank, immediately above and below the stream crossing, and mitigates disturbance to the stream channel and stream bank at the crossing.
    - Pull log bundles/or crossing structure once stream crossing is no longer required.