

NOTICE TO BCTS TIMBERSALES LICENSEES AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS

OHS Regulation 20.78: Work Instructions related to 'Excavations'

Applies to all road and infrastructure construction activities where excavated cut banks occur. **OHS Regulation 20.78** requires that **excavation** work **must** be done in accordance with the **written instructions** of a **qualified registered professional** if:

- (a) the excavation is more than 6 m (20 ft) deep,
- (b) an improvement or structure is adjacent to the excavation,
- (c) the excavation is subject to vibration or hydrostatic pressure likely to result in ground movement hazardous to workers, (vibration includes adjacent blasting, heavy equipment traffic, or operation of compaction equipment etc, and hydrostatic pressure is indicated by the presence of any surface or subsurface water flow occurring above or within the excavated slope), **or**
- (d) the ground slopes away from the edge of the excavation at an angle steeper than a ratio of 3 horizontal to 1 vertical (33%).

Note that (a) through (d) are independent of each other. (i.e. you don't have to have a 6m excavation with an improvement next to it for the regulation to apply.)

Additionally, OHSR 20.78 requires that written instructions by a **professional engineer** are required if an excavation involves, uses or requires any type of support structures (such as retaining walls, shoring etc). For exact details of section 20.78 please refer to the OH&S regulation.

Normally, sections where this regulation applies will be clearly identified in road and block project plans or as addendums to these plans, but this may not be in all cases. If no written instructions by a qualified professional have been provided with the contract or Timber Sale Licence and any of OHS regulation conditions are encountered, the road builder must provide written instruction to workers prior to construction on those sections beginning. Note if written instructions are provided and the road location is altered or conditions other than those identified in the road design are encountered new instructions will have to be given to workers by the employer. In any event:

ROAD CONSTRUCTION MUST HALT IMMEDIATELY SHOULD ANY CUT or FILL SLOPE BECOME UNSTABLE OR SHOW SIGNS OF INSTABILITIES. NO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT MAY OCCUR UNTIL A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL IS SATISFIED THAT IT IS SAFE TO PROCEED. ALL WORKERS MUST BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL SIGNS OF CUT BANK OR FILL SLOPE INSTABILITY.

Localized signs of potential instability include (but are not limited to) areas with seepage and/or wet soils, slow draining fine textured soils (clay, silt, organic), pistol butted or jack-strawed trees, steeply dipping rock fractures and/or where evidence of old slumps, slides, rockfall or debris flows exist.

The responsibility for compliance with this regulation and communicating potential hazards to workers ultimately rests with the employer (Licensee or Prime Contractor). BCTS does its best to provide information about known hazards identified during planning but this does not guarantee that other related or unknown hazards do not exist.

For more information regarding the full text and guidelines related to this regulation visit:

<http://www2.worksafefbc.com/publications/OHSRegulation/Part20.asp#SectionNumber:20.78>

[http://www2.worksafefbc.com/publications/ohsregulation/GuidelinePart20.asp#SectionNumber:G20.78\(1\)](http://www2.worksafefbc.com/publications/ohsregulation/GuidelinePart20.asp#SectionNumber:G20.78(1))

Also see related regulation: OHSR Section 26.18 'Landslides'