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NOTICE

CHANGES TO RADIO COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOREST SERVICE ROADS

This letter is to advise of pending changes to radio communication protocols for forest service roads in the Quesnel Natural Resource District.

Standard resource road radio communications protocols are being implemented in the Quesnel Natural Resource District following successful outcomes of pilot projects (on Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast and the South Peace areas of the province), examining whether road user safety could be improved through standardized protocols for mobile radio communications when travelling on resource roads in British Columbia. The pilot projects consisted of implementing; standardized radio communications signage, a set of dedicated resource road radio channels, and standardized call procedures.

The standard resource road radio communications protocol, radio channels and signs were developed by the Radio Communications Working Group, with representatives from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (including BC Timber Sales), Industry Canada, BC Forest Safety Council/Truck Safe and FPInnovations. The working group coordinated numerous meetings with forest licensees and truck drivers in developing the protocol. The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations lead the implementation and evaluation of the pilot projects. Industry Canada is taking the greater lead role as implementation of the standard protocols spreads to other areas of the province.

Previously, mobile radio communications has been highly variable across the province with users required to know the unwritten local protocols. Heavy radio traffic volume caused frequent overlapping calls and interference resulting in reduced safety of radio communications systems. Truckers and other road users with mobile radios needed to re-program their radios to gain access to local radio channels, as they moved around to different work locations. In the pilot areas, a single set of radio channels was used on forest service roads. New communication signs were posted for the pilot roads indicating which radio channel to use as well as calling procedure including: road name, location, direction being travelled, vehicle type and calling interval.

The pilot projects were successful and the new standard protocols are gradually expanding from the original pilot areas, into other areas of the province.

Activity is underway in the Thompson Rivers, Cascades, Okanagan Shuswap, and Quesnel Natural Resource Districts, in the Southern Interior, to transition to the standard communications protocols on resource roads. The transition to full implementation will commence Monday, **May 4, 2015**.

Throughout the next several weeks resource roads will be re-posted with the new standard radio channel numbers. Road radio users shall be expected to have the revised standard bank of Resource Road Radio Channels (40 channels), pre-programmed into their radios prior to the May 4, 2015 implementation date, for use when the posted channels are updated on individual roads. Radio shops are aware and prepared to program radios with the revised channels.

Note: It is recommended that road users retain current radio frequencies until such time that they are no longer required.

Where posted, users using mobile radios **must use** the posted channels and call protocols. All road users are reminded that forest service roads and the majority of resource roads, are not radio controlled but are radio assisted, and should drive safely according to weather and road conditions.

It is recommended that all users exercise additional caution when travelling on resource roads during the transition period. This information will be communicated to all affected employees and contractors.

Local Resource Road Safety committees have worked together to bring this change about in each area and forest licensees have been disseminating information to their employees and contractors.

Thanks to all those involved in collaborating in the transition, including forest licensees and road safety committees to make this a safe transition.

For further information, please contact: Terry Street, Engineering Officer, Quesnel Natural Resource District at 250-992-4400 or Industry Canada at 1-800-667-3780.

A summary report of the pilot projects, produced by FPInnovations, as well as other information pertaining to resource road radio communications can be found by visiting: www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/engineering/Road_Radio_Project.htm.

Rodger Stewart
A/District Manager
Quesnel Natural Resource District