



FORESTRY MUTUAL NEWS

Newsletter of the Forestry Mutual Insurance Company

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK...

Forestry Mutual completed 2016 on a positive note thanks to the efforts of our policyholders and our loss prevention staff. We appreciate and value our policyholders cooperation with our various safety initiatives. It has been our recipe for success. Thank you!

Along those lines, trucking remains a top priority for our industry across the country and our company. Truck drivers and trucking accidents continue once again was our leader in claims filed and the severity of losses.

In conjunction with Forest Mutual Insurance Company (FMIC) Agency, Forestry Mutual recently developed a sample owner and driver book that we be distributing electronically to our policyholders via flash drives. This will allow each company to customize them to meet your operation's needs.

While we are discussing truck safety, how many of our policyholders utilize the SAFER system? The Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) System offers company safety data to the industry and the public that can be viewed on the internet. Each company has a SAFER profile based on scores from DOT inspections. Insurance company underwriters review these scores when determining whether they quote an account and what premium to charge. Each of the insurance carriers have their own matrix and assign point values according to the infractions found within a company's SAFER report. As a company, you are accountable for your drivers and their collective SAFER score.

If you are interested in retrieving your SAFER score online, here are some directions.

- Type in www.ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/sms and a screen will appear that requires you to enter your company name or DOT # to access your information.
- Scroll down on the page and look for the box that has this name above it: *Check Motor Carrier Safety and Performance Data.*
- Select your company name if more than one company with the same name.
- Click on the underlined DOT # and view

each category by clicking on the box. The information will let you see the write-ups received and your standing among other companies.

I also highly recommend the use of dash cameras and GPS systems. How many times have we heard a vehicle crossed the center line or a deer ran out in front of the vehicle causing the accident? For a very small investment (around \$130 and up), dash cameras provide the complete picture of the accident in moving color. If you are at fault in an incident, the camera will not be your ally. That is certainly true. However, in those situations when you could use another set of eyes and testimony, a dash camera can be that resource when someone else or something else caused the incident.

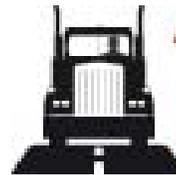
Our entire FMIC staff is now equipped with dash cameras in their trucks! We have heard firsthand how they have saved our policyholders. Let's all do our part to stop this trend from getting worse.

Sincerely,

Keith S. Biggs



Keith Biggs



TEAM SAFE TRUCKING

TST HITS RESET BUTTON

The Team Safe Trucking (TST) organization met in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, in February to provide an update on its recent reorganization and rededication to its commitment to improve truck driver safety in the forest products industry.

"This is a reboot, if you will," stated newly elected President of Team Safe Trucking Jeremiah O'Donovan. "We have all the pieces in place. We are just simplifying things in an effort to generate information, training materials, and other deliverables to our participating groups by the third quarter of this year."

O'Donovan leads an executive committee that includes Richard Schwab, vice president; Joanne Reese, Treasurer; J.J. Lemire, secretary; and Keith Biggs, special adviser. And of course, there is Jimmie Locklear, the



Jeremiah O'Donovan

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THE SAWSHOP

by Bryan Wagner
Chainsaw Trainer for
Forestry Mutual



SPRING TIME LOGGING SAFETY

The spring logging woods can prove to be deadly, given the risks that are introduced into an already inherently dangerous occupation. The two major risks that are unleashed in the spring are; reduced visibility and bark slippage.

Around the first week of April in the south, the turkeys are gobbling and the fish are biting as Mother Nature spreads her wings with a brilliant show of new foliage and growth. Overhead hazards that could be easily seen in an open canopy of winter are now hidden by the fresh leaves of spring. Please take the time to review the time proven Heads Up For Hazards program with your crew.

- Use approved personal protective equipment (PPE) for head protection.
- Look and scan at least 50 feet ahead on your path of travel.
- Look and scan at least 100 feet ahead for overhead hazards.
- Don't place yourself under any object that can fall or move due to gravity or the loss of hydraulic pressure.
- Maintain at least two tree lengths from any felling operation.
- Be visible!! Wear high visibility safety colors.
- Maintain communication with anyone in the work area.
- Never walk into a work area with running or moving equipment until the equipment is stopped, engine cut-off and implements grounded.
- Use proper manual felling techniques. Accurate directional felling avoids risk in the manual felling process. The "Controlled Release" or the bore-cut method of the back-cut is recommended, the tree doesn't move while being cut. This method also allows the timber-cutter more time to use and execute his escape from the falling tree!
- Timber-cutters must adjust to a full canopy of leaves; wind is more of a factor now!

Our spring logging environment also has extra risk when the slick inner-bark rivals a banana peel when it comes to footing! The heaviest concentration of slippery bark on the deck area. Truck drivers and deck hands should take extra care to avoid the discarded bark and the slick debarked logs that are present at the landing. Again, Owners should take the time to review Slip/Trip and Fall issues with your entire crew.

- Proper footwear with good ankle support is mandatory.
- All platforms, steps and handles must be kept free from grease, oil and other foreign substances.
- Proper three-point of contact, mount and dismount of equipment.
- Avoid slick bark, logs or limbs. Stump holes, rocks and vines are to be considered safety risks.
- Wear high visibility safety colors. Be seen!!
- When not cutting, the chain brake of the chainsaw must be engaged. More than two steps with a running chainsaw requires the chain brake to be activated.
- Stay on the "uphill" side of felled timber and stems.

The spring logging woods is indeed beautiful. Let's keep a handle on the new risks that are introduced - HEADS-UP!

INSURABILITY OF LOG TRUCKS

by Nick Carter, Forestry Mutual

How many have heard or experienced commercial auto insurance premiums increasing?

I am here to tell you the trucking industry is in a crisis and we must **ACT NOW**.

What are you doing as an organization to control the losses?

Countless quality log trucking operations fall victim to unnecessary and frivolous lawsuits simply for not protecting the company's greatest asset, the driver. A logger does not get paid until that load of wood crosses the scales, and *I do not foresee drones delivering wood any time soon.*

As an insurance agency representing multiple carriers, I can sympathize with both sides of the equation. The upward spiral of commercial auto premiums can quickly outpace the bottom line for the company.

Once a claim occurs, costs escalate quickly. I have heard of a premium with claims increasing up to 300% plus.

What's even of greater concern is the fact that some commercial auto carriers are steering away from writing truck insurance, not just logging but trucking in general. These companies include the likes of AIG, Zurich and Progressive that are no longer writing truck insurance. These carriers withdrew from the market because they were constantly taking a loss.

So you might ask what are driving these costs and frequencies upward? A starting point is the cost of trucks. Trucks have almost doubled in price over the last six years. A new day-cab truck costs upwards of \$150,000.

A second factor is that ninety percent of passenger vehicles on the road carry the minimum

limits of \$25,000 so commercial insurance companies take the underinsured motorist claim. This is something that will most likely need to be addressed by government intervention on behalf of the trucking industry some time in the future.

Another factor is the rising costs of health care and the reality that the bodily injury costs associated with a non-fatal accident have increased significantly.

Cell phones continue to wreak havoc on our the safety of our roadways. Everyone seems to have a cell phone and the burning desire to talk on it and/or text on it all the while smoking a cigarette or eating a sandwich at the wheel.



It goes without saying that at times it seems if there is an attorney on every street corner looking to capitalize on an accident with an injured party.

Please educate your current driving force on the importance of keeping his/hers driving record clear.

Insurance carriers have really cracked down on the insurability of the driver. It will continue to get tighter.

CDL drivers must realize their livelihood depends on it. Carriers are reviewing drivers records going back as far as 10 years with a special emphasis on the last three years.

Upon review of MVR's, speeding violations seem to be

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JOB SAFETY – WHO’S RESPONSIBLE?

by Jimmy McCraney, Forestry Mutual

Our workforce is not only better off today than it was a century ago, but it is also far better off from a safety perspective. In 1913, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) documented 23,000 industrial deaths among a workforce of 38 million people, which is the equivalent to 61 deaths per 100,000 workers. Recently, the BLS reported over 6,000 deaths, among a workforce of 134 million people, or fewer than 5 deaths per 100,000.

The numbers indicate that employers have made significant progress towards improving employee safety. The forest products industry should be commended for its commitment to improving its employee safety record. A key to the success in this improvement has been the ability to engage employees, supervisors, and management in making safety a top priority.

The best worker safety and health protection occurs when everyone at the workplace shares responsibility for safety. Employees at all levels should be actively involved in finding and correcting safety and health concerns. Each person must understand the hazards and/or potential hazards that are associated with their area of expertise.

Employees should formally acknowledge these hazards by signing a company’s safety and health rules policies. They must know specific workplace hazards, safe work practices, and their role in all types of emergencies. Employers should train all of their new hires as part of job training and later reinforce it with scheduled safety meetings.

Supervisors should be given specific training on how to lead safety meetings and be helpful in identifying hazards in the workplace on a daily basis. Supervisors should be promoting safety programs, correcting safety concerns, and when necessary, taking enforcement measures with employees to ensure the safety of their employees. Supervisors should understand their responsibilities and take them seriously.

Company owners must understand their own responsibilities for safety and health as well. This normally just requires effective communications with supervisors and employees, but understanding, developing and implementing safety programs will increase a company’s bottom line over time.

Remember, the best safety and health protection program occurs when everyone shares responsibility for safety. Employees, supervisors, and owners must work together to ensure the workplace is free of unknown hazards. Through the use of meaningful communications and consistent policies, safety in the workplace is achievable!

Forestry Mutual policyholders can now pay their monthly premiums on-line. Should your company be interested in signing up or inquiring this payment method, please contact Brittany Rhinehart or Tammy Bowers at (800) 849-7788.



TST Hits Reset Button... (from page 1)

unofficial spokesman for TST who have never met a stranger in his life.

TST has applied for non-profit status and hopes to earn it by May of 2017. The staff is entirely volunteer. All donations to TST are appreciated and used for program implementation.

The top takeaway from TST is its composition and mission. It is comprised of the four groups that are most impacted by a well-trained and focused forest products drivers - loggers, insurance companies, forest products companies, and various forestry state, regional and national organizations. One of the basic rules with TST is that there are now competitors in the room once the meeting starts. It’s all about teamwork. It’s all about inclusion.

Every committee that is established has representation from each group to ensure that every initiative is team-oriented. Each group is asked a basic question, What can my segment (logger, insurance company, etc) bring to the table to make things better?

Doing it right saves money for everyone, but more importantly, the proper attitude will reduce accidents and save lives.

There is no better example on what the power of approach and attitude can do for our forest products truckers than Tom Buckingham with the Forest Insurance Center. Three years ago, Buckingham reported that his loss ratios for trucking had consistently been 100% for five years straight. This trend was a road to nowhere. A road to doom and gloom.

Buckingham and his staff set forward to change the attitude within their own ranks first, and then they went after their policyholders’ outlook by presenting significant changes as an opportunity to make their business better, more profitable.

“It came down to a basic change in attitude,” stated Buckingham to a well-attended

TST meeting. “We convinced ourselves that we can raise the bar. We can make a difference.”

Among the new requirements, Buckingham led his policyholders through a general review of the hiring practices for truck drivers, equipment maintenance, load securement procedures and weights, pretrip inspections and on-road responsibilities. For those companies that wanted to jump on board, it has been a great ride so far. For others, not so great.

“I’ll be honest with this group,” stated Buckingham. “I lost some friends over this, but we need to engage people who are going to take the steps to make the roads safer.”

He also reached out to establish partnerships with state authorities and state safety oriented organizations to run a truck safety continuing education program. The attitude change has produced results.

This past year, Buckingham saw the loss ratios on his trucking accounts drop significantly, recording loss ratios as low as 13 percent.

In addition to the example presented by Buckingham, the TST group heard several updates from other members who are working on TST initiated projects or their company’s truck safety initiatives.

Mark Britton of Kapstone shared his company’s Truck Driver Day held at his facility last year where the company along with representatives of the Carolina Loggers Association and the Virginia Loggers Association reviewed safety tips with drivers. The drivers were appreciative of the special recognition and the information that was shared throughout the day.

Scott Barrett with Virginia Tech shared some preliminary results from a survey project on log truck accidents listed by the federal government.

While Barrett reminded the audience he had just started (continued on page 4)

Insurability of Log Trucks..(from page 2)

the number one reason for underwriters to decline a driver. It makes sense considering the driver will be behind the wheel of an 80,000-plus pound log truck.

We can control speed on rigs by monitoring the driver's habits by either using telematics or governors. So what can you be doing to be proactive versus reactive?

For less than \$200 investment, a dash cam can be your eyes on the road when you are not there to see it for yourself. It can also save your driver from an unwanted citation if he is involved in an accident when not at fault, but he is being blamed for the accident since there are no witnesses available.

The two things that I commonly hear the most from drivers is either an animal ran in front of the truck or that a car pulled out in front of me. In both cases, there is no proof to your story without a witness.

My advice to our policyholders is to invest a little to potentially save a lot. By equipping every truck you put on the road with dash cams and reviewing the habits of your drivers, you can improve your bottom line in terms of insurance and maintenance costs.

I would also remind our policyholders to be very cognitive of your SAFER report. Review the DOT enforcement officers comments to eliminate the same infractions going into the future.

For further information on how you can lower your exposure in the trucking marketplace, please contact your FMIC field representative or agency representative. ■

TST Hits Reset Button...(from page 3)

on the project and certainly needed to be reviewed further, it was interesting that the data appears to show that the fewest log truck accidents occur on the highway as opposed to a different category road such as a side road, etc.

This certainly leads credence to the argument that log trucks should have access to state and federal highways with the existing state weight tolerance to improve the overall safety of our roads.

The meeting wrapped up with a review of general impressions from the participants in the room. Some were making their first meeting while others have been involved since the program's inception three years ago. The comments varied in terms of content, but the overwhelming sense of optimism for the Team Safe Trucking program was obvious. This is a program that can make a difference!

If you are interested in learning more about this program, there is a website and a Facebook page you can find by searching for Team Safe Trucking. ■

Insurance fraud impacts everyone. Call us at our toll free number 1-800-849-7788 if you suspect insurance fraud is being or has been committed.

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