



OVERTURNING TIMBER HAULAGE LORRIES

Background

There has been two recent incidents of loaded timber haulage lorries, overturning on forest roads. Neither driver suffered life threatening injuries. Damage was caused to the lorries as a result of the accident.

What Happened

In both cases the trailer wheels tracked too close to the edge of the forest road while approaching a bend. The trailer wheels veered off the edge of the road causing both the trailer and lorry unit to overturn and shed their loads.

Findings

1. While the investigations are still ongoing, in each case:
 - a. the forest roads were slightly raised above the surrounding ground
 - b. there was adequate forest road carriageway width to facilitate the safe travel of lorries
 - c. the forest road carriageway was in a satisfactory condition
 - d. a significant number of lorries had safely traversed these forest roads in the days leading up to the accidents
2. Tyre tracks on the site show the trailer wheels travelling too close to the edge of the road
3. Driving too close to the road edge was a major contributing factor to the cause of these accidents

Corrective Action

- Hauliers must make their drivers aware of the significant difference between driving on Local Authority roads and forest roads. Forest roads are narrower, unbound gravelled roads (not tarred) and may be raised above surrounding ground
- Drivers must pay attention to their vehicle position on forest roads and avoid taking bends or corners too tightly
- If a loaded trailer starts to veer off a forest road, stop immediately and seek assistance rather than proceeding in the hope of pulling it back on to the road. The high centre of gravity will more than likely cause the lorry to overturn

Learning Points

- Drivers must remember that forest roads are relatively narrow and hence a moments inattention is all it might take to stray off the edge
- Driver induction and awareness is essential (which includes the Coillte Initiafy online course)
- A forest road speed limit of 25 km/hr exists as part of the means of managing the safety for all forest users
- Guidance on vehicle overturning is available on the HSA website and should be viewed by all haulage operators ([web link](#))

Please Don't Walk By



Ensure this Safety Alert is brought to the attention of all employees and sub-contractors.