



Potential for Forest & Prairie Fires

CAGC INFORMATION ALERT

First Published 06 - 2005

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Information Alert

17-05

16 June 2005

This safety bulletin is released to remind the membership of the potential for forest and prairie fires when conducting geophysical seismic operations.

To date, areas of Alberta have received a lot of rainfall. While it may appear that the fire index is low, please remember that a fire (forest or grassland) can still easily start. In addition, when the rainfall amounts decline, the drying of fine and ladder fuels can happen very quickly and thus the fire index can rise drastically.

When on a job site, having readily available the minimum amount of firefighting equipment is a requirement of legislation and can be a condition of the Approval letter. The list of minimum required equipment is found in the appropriate jurisdiction's legislation i.e. within Alberta it is found under the Forest and Prairie Protection Act (see table below). It is important to remember to check the required firefighting equipment prior to going to work. Shovel and Pulaski handles can incur dry rot over the course of sitting idle and the back pack water tanks require periodic service (check the mfg's recommendations for maintenance).

In addition to the required firefighting equipment it is important to:

- Ensure that your workers are familiar with the use of the equipment and how to employ the use of the equipment together. One backpack with four shovels can usually fight more fire efficiently than four back packs alone;
- Cache your firefighting equipment in a location whereby it is readily deployable;
- Identify your water and equipment resources i.e. helicopter, crawler dozer's, water trucks, etc;
- Assign 'Fire Warden's', people who in the event of a fire will organize your fire fighting team. Remember to brief them on what their responsibilities are;
- Have a fire fighting plan in place prior to going to work. Make sure that this plan is posted and discussed in your periodic meetings;
- Have a fire evacuation plan in place prior to going to work. Ensure all workers are familiar with the plan's protocols. Test it, a plan on paper does not guarantee success when an actual occurrence happens;
- Make sure that you have all appropriate telephone numbers on your plan. There are several of these numbers that are required no matter what jurisdiction you are working in (check with your local forestry officer if you are unsure);
- Conduct periodic fire watch checks;
- Address the fire issue in your safety meetings. Smoking on a work site may or may not be permitted. If this is the case, it is up to all to adhere to the condition.

By practicing the above, not only will a company go a long way in ensuring the safety of their workers and displaying good corporate responsibility, in response the regulator in your jurisdiction may grant you concessions when working in their area and allow you to continue working through a period of an i.e. high fire index.