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ROAD RULES PROMOTE SAFE DRIVING ON OFF-HIGHWAY ROADS

Safety: transportation

October 2003

INTRODUCTION:

The North Maine Woods encompasses over four million acres of predominantly private industrial forest. A vast network of gravel roads supports the wood fiber transportation needs of nearly a dozen different landowners. Recent changes in ownership have led to changes in road maintenance priorities, gate access, and trucking routes as new landowners access different wood markets. These changes, coupled with ever-increasing recreational activity by the public in the North Maine Woods, inspired landowners to develop *Rules of the Road for Industrial Logging Roads*.



Fig. 1: Complementing the Rules of the Road policy on Maine's extensive private roads, a vehicle numbering system helps identify vehicle when unsafe driving is observed.

GENERAL FEATURES: The following *Rules of the Road* were originally developed by the Northeastern Technical Division's Safety and Training Committee and later augmented by industrial landowners within the North Maine Woods to emphasize specific concerns.

- 1) Seatbelts must be worn at all times.
- 2) Obey all posted speed limits and signs.
- 3) Be prepared to stop at all checkpoints and reduce speed—not to exceed 10 mph.
- 4) Keep your lights on for safety.
- 5) In areas of limited visibility, always stay to the right and reduce speed.
- 6) All drivers must have a valid state or Provincial driver's license.
- 7) All vehicles yield right-of-way to loaded trucks.
- 8) For additional safety, drivers should use the posted CB channels to declare the mile marker and landmarks to any oncoming vehicles.

- 9) Drivers must be in control of their vehicles at all times.
- 10) All vehicles operating on logging roads must meet minimum mechanical safety standards for the work being performed.
- 11) Load weights must be within the safe design capacity of the truck.
- 12) All pieces of wood must be below the height of at least two stakes.
- 13) A minimum of two chains or straps must be used to secure each tier of wood. (Tree length loads require a minimum of three chains or straps.)

These are minimum standards on industrial logging roads. Appropriate local, state, and Provincial laws apply to all other road systems.

APPLICATION: The *Rules* were distributed during spring mud season meetings between landowners and the contractors. In some cases, the *Rules* have been attached as an addendum to cut-and-haul contracts as an added reminder about compliance. To date, feedback from contractors has been positive.

Consequences for violating the Rules are left to the discretion of the landowner whose road system the behavior occurred on. Punitive measures would be based on the severity of the infraction. All parties agree, however, that it will require a concerted effort by all road users to address unsafe driving behavior on this large private road system. Now that the *Rules* have been issued and promoted, they serve as a benchmark for raising the level of safety on industrial logging roads.

Vehicle Numbering System

In addition to instituting the *Rules of the Road* policy, several landowners within the North Maine Woods have implemented a vehicle numbering system for all commercial logging and forestry traffic. The six-inch decals are located on the front and rear of each vehicle to help identify vehicles when unsafe driving behavior is observed. When a report is made, the vehicle number along with the road location and a description of the behavior is relayed to the landowner for follow-up with the driver.

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