



## FMG HAZARD ALERT Helicopter Safety

Location: Grande Prairie

Date of Incidents: June 5, 2014

### Details of incident:

An employee was driving to a planting block, as they were working with the Silviculture team for the day. They started driving down the road towards the helicopter active staging area. The truck radio had been changed to the contractor's radio frequency just as employee entered the road. A helicopter had 'just' flown in after coming back from slinging tree boxes, and passed over the employee's vehicle. The employee continued to drive down the road, passing the active helicopter and the staging area. The contractor supervisor had clear hand signals guiding the employee to stop and reverse out of the active area. The employee did not stop and continued to slowly drive past the active helicopter and pull off to the side of the road.

At this point, the truck was out of the way of the helicopter. The helicopter (slung with tree boxes) exited the area beside the employee's truck. The pilot thought the truck was clear. The hazard of tree boxes hitting the truck was evident (should they fall out of sling).

### Contributing factors:

- The employee (driver) was unfamiliar with the activity and hazards, as this was his first time visiting a planting operation.
- The other employees in the truck were also new to planting activities and potential hazards
- The driver was not sure of the hand signals by the Supervisor

### Key Learnings and Recommendations:

- When starting a new activity, become familiarized with the hazards
  - Ensure they are reviewed with you, and you understand.
- Review the procedures of the work involved if planning on working on a new task/activity (all safety procedures and general expectations (ask lots of questions)).
- If it is your first time working around helicopters, review the Helicopter SWP in the FMG OHS
- Crew should discuss hazard en route to the block (complete FMG Tailgate Hazard Form)
- Operations using helicopters for work should place/park a temporary barrier across the road into active helicopter block until the active operation is completed (ie: park a vehicle across the access road to keep vehicles out of the high risk area).
- If you do have to drive in to the site: Always radio well in advance of entering an area where helicopter operations are close to a road, and stop and communicate with foreman before proceeding into the area.



For more information, please call: Kerri Simmons, 250-962-3456