

AN ANALYSIS OF LOG HAULING VEHICLE CRASHES AND COMPARISON BY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS IN THE UNITED STATES IN YEARS 2011-2015

Neila Cole¹, Scott Barrett², Chad Bolding³, Mike Aust⁴

Log truck crashes have increased across the United States. The reported number of logging trucks involved in a fatal collision increased 31 percent from 2011 to 2015. This is concerning, and little has been reported about the characteristics of these collisions. An analysis of 383 crashes involving log trucks was performed nationwide and divided into four geographic regions in order to assess crash characteristics and compare them regionally. Data was obtained from two federally maintained crash databases. Log trucks experienced a rollover in 78% of fatal crashes, and rollovers were the first event to cause harm in 32% of single vehicle crashes, compared to 8% of multiple vehicle crashes. In multiple vehicle crashes another vehicle directly contributed the crash over half (53.2%) of the time. Crashes vary by day of week and month in different regions. We calculated a rate of crashes using reported crash data and the US Forest Service harvest data for each state. Overall, the US had an average rate of 0.7 fatal log truck crashes per 100 million ft³ of wood harvested. The southeast region had more total crashes, and the highest rate of log truck crash fatalities with 0.9 fatalities per 100 million ft³.

¹Neila Cole, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Cheatham Hall, 310 W Campus Drive Virginia Polytechnic Institute, neila.cole@vt.edu

²Scott Barrett, Assistant Professor of Forest Operations, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Cheatham Hall Rm 228D, 310 W Campus Drive, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, VA. sbarrett@vt.edu

³Chad Bolding, Associate Professor of Forest Operations, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Cheatham Hall Rm 228D, 310 W Campus Drive, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, VA, bolding@vt.edu

⁴Michael Aust, Professor of Forestry, Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Cheatham Hall Rm 228D, 310 W Campus Drive, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, VA, waust@vt.edu