

Western James Bay Winter Road

Operated by Kimesskanamenow
Corporation

WINTER ROAD UPDATE

MARCH, 2009



15 people participated in the training. Bernie Sutherland, Edmund Edwards, and Wally Turner from Kimesskanamenow Corporation, Frederick Wesley, Bernard Spence, Steve Hookimaw (Fire Chief), Michael Fireman, and Jonathan Hookimaw from Attawapiskat First Nation, Michael Wesley (Fire Chief) from Kashechewan First Nation, Jeff Innes, Drake Tomatuk, Chris Alisappi (Fire Chief), Eldon Cheechoo, and Michael Delaney from Moose Cree First Nation, and Michael Sutherland (Fire Chief), from Fort Albany First Nation.

VEHICLE EXTRICATION AND AWARENESS TRAINING

The Emergency Response, Vehicle & Awareness training session provided to the members of the James Bay Winter Road Emergency Response Team took place in Fort Albany on February 25 & 26, 2009. During the first day of training, members of the team were introduced to the principles of auto extrication highlighting the need to ensure the safety of both the team members and those trapped in a damaged vehicle. Participants were then introduced to the various types of extrication related equipment with a focus on the importance of proper equipment maintenance and tool safety.

The final topic of the first day involved basic extrication operations. The participants received instruction on scene and vehicle stabilization, common vehicle terminology as well as some common extrication operations including door and roof removals.

On the second day of training, the Emergency Response Team had the opportunity to work as a team and to use the new extrication equipment. Divided into two groups, each had the opportunity to practice both scene and vehicle stabilization as well as a chance to practice the removal of the doors and roof from a vehicle. The final evaluation brought both groups together to perform a multiple door and roof removal on a third vehicle. This exercise allowed the group to practice safety while working with other team members, and allowed the entire group to develop a sense of team work. Both groups performed well in the individual tasks and the group task.

The organizers wish to extend thanks to the instructors, Kurt Gagain and Craig Hartley from Fire Safety Solutions out of Timmins. These individuals are full time firefighters with the city of Timmins.

ROAD CLOSING DATE

The James Bay Winter Road is expected to close late in March, depending on the weather conditions.

This season has been relatively safe so far, with only four reported accidents to date, and no serious injuries reported. Traffic was down from previous years as a result of decreased demands from the Victor Diamond Mine.

As the season draws to a close, it is important to continue to exercise caution while driving on the winter road, reducing speeds and taking more care as the temperatures rise and the road starts to melt. Conditions will be monitored by Winter Road staff throughout the month, and the road may be temporarily closed if temperatures rise in order to prolong the winter road season. Please obey any signs that are posted and be aware that once the road is officially closed at the end of the season, it is no longer safe for travel.

Winter Road maintenance is ongoing, and at the end of the season there will be drilling on both of the Albany River crossings to encourage a safe and smooth break up of the ice. Drilling will not start until after the road is officially closed. Anyone who continues to use the road after the closure must exercise extreme caution in the areas where drilling has been done as the ice may be considerably weakened.

SAFETY REMINDERS

Wally Turner, the Road Safety Coordinator for Kimesskanamenow Corporation wants to remind all users of the Winter Road about safety. While there may be fewer loads servicing the Victor Diamond Mine, there is still a lot of traffic on the road. There have been four minor accidents on the road this year, and no one suffered serious injuries, however, both accidents could have been easily avoided, simply by road users driving slower.

Many people are driving too fast on the road and boasting of how quickly they can get from Attawapiskat to Moosonee. This is not safe and puts others at risk. There are also many drivers on the road who are accelerating on turns causing other drivers to panic. Your safety is your responsibility. We will continue to do all we can, but if you are not driving safely, it puts other road users at risk.

Some individuals have also been running over the safety cones that are placed on the road for a variety of reasons. It is important to avoid these cones because they may indicate a hole in the surface of the road, or a rock that is protruding and could damage vehicles. Running over these cones may damage your vehicle, and if the cone is moved, others may damage their vehicle as a result.

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