

# Why Did It Happen To Me?

by Harvey Kuester

It is a human trait for anyone who has had an accident to ask, "Why did it happen to me?" There are probably two reasons an individual will ask such a question: (1) to feel sorry for himself and to get sympathy from others, or (2) to objectively analyze what happened and try to determine what could have been done differently to prevent the accident.

There is nothing wrong with either reason. We all need sympathy and reassurance, but when we stop at that point, there is a tendency to place the blame on another person or to charge it to fate. Objectively analyzing the factors which lead up to the accident is more rewarding in the long run because it can help us to avoid getting into another accident.

If the accident was vehicular, we might ask ourselves some of the following questions:

■ Was the vehicle or equipment I was operating in good mechanical and physical condition?

■ Was I practicing good defensive driving techniques?

■ Did I react to the situation in the best possible manner?

■ Was I wearing the safety belts which were provided?

On the other hand we might ask ourselves the following questions if it was a non-vehicular accident:

■ Was I wearing the proper personal protective equipment?

■ Was I using the right tools for the work I was doing?

■ Was I wearing the proper attire for the work I was engaged in?

■ Was I following the accepted safe standards for the work I was performing?

When we ask ourselves these questions, we are performing our own accident investigation.

While we can all benefit from accident investigation, all of us will agree that preventing an accident is the best approach. Job training, protective equipment, teamwork, a cooperative attitude, and open discussion of the safety aspects of our work at safety meetings are some of the accident prevention tools which are available.

Accident prevention then, is the key to avoiding accidents. If we keep this in mind during the course of our work and other daily activities, we can substantially reduce the need for both sympathy and accident analysis. We can instead say, "it doesn't have to happen to me." In addition, we can be proud of our ability to perform work safely and efficiently within our work environment.

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*Timber Bridges...*  
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A relatively new, and very simple, timber bridge layout is becoming increasingly popular. The so-called longitudinal deck bridge dispenses with the spanning girders, and supports the load solely with the deck itself. Clear spans of up to 48 feet have been achieved, even carrying heavy logging trucks. There are several ways to interconnect the separate spanning deck components. Four foot wide glulam panels can be held together by a simple transverse beam suspended under the deck. This joining member will get all the deck panels to resist the applied loads, not just those under the tires. Some companies simply supply large (8x14, for example) members and bolt them together on the site.

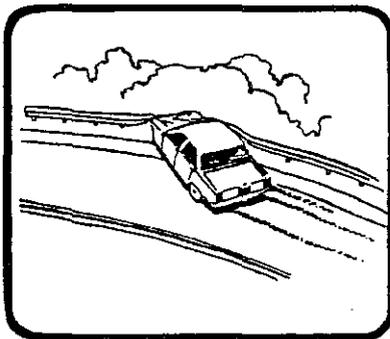
The Canadians are having much success with a "post-tensioned" timber deck system, wherein the deck planks are squeezed together with high strength steel through-rod<sup>2</sup>. This clamping force means that all the deck members deflect together, sharing and distributing the wheel point loadings. The post-tensioning rods have been used in retrofits on loosened nail-laminated decks, replacement decks in rehabilitation jobs, and in completely new bridge construction.

An increasing number of locally built bridges are using modern treated timber in the principal structural elements. If your steel and concrete bridges have not been enduring the rigors of the New Hampshire winters and de-icing agents as well as you might hope, a closer look at the timber alternative could be a money saver for you.

## References

1. Brungraber, Gutkowski, Kindya, McWilliams, "Timber Bridges: Part of the Solution for Rural America," submitted to TRB Steering Committee for presentation at 4th Low Volume Road Conference.
2. Csagoly, Taylor, "A Structural Wood System for Highway Bridges," IABSE Proceedings p-35/80, November, 1980.

The preceding article, by R.L. Brungraber, Assistant Professor at the University of Connecticut and Chairman of the ASCE Committee on Timber Bridges, was modified and reprinted with permission from *Technology Transfer*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Fall 1986. ■



# Did You Know?

*What is of interest to your peers and colleagues*

In the Fall of '86 The Technology Transfer Center sent out an interest survey to Road Agents, Public Works Directors, Town Managers and Selectmen. We would like to thank you for your responses and share the results with you.

To start with, about 65% of New Hampshire's roads are paved. Certainly, some towns have more gravel roads than others so this number should only be thought of as a general overall figure.

50% of the estimated road condition ratings that we received fell in the fair to poor categories. 33% of the respondents estimated roads to be in good condition, 16% in very good condition and only 1% in excellent condition.

We also asked our survey respondents which areas of Public Works were of greatest interest. The following top 10 subjects were selected: (1) pavement maintenance, (2) construction of roads, (3) design of roads, (4) snow & ice control, (5) solid waste disposal, (6) materials & aggregates, (7) bridges, (8) equipment management, (9) administration and regulations; and (10) highway safety.

Four areas were found to be posing the most difficult problems for our towns: (1) maintenance—not including winter maintenance; (2) rapid expansion and increased traffic; (3) personnel; and (4) road design and construction. Three areas were singled out as areas reflecting success: (1) maintenance—not including winter maintenance; (2) personnel; and (3) finance.

It's good to know that our towns have been attacking some of the more difficult problems and arriving at working solutions. ■

# The 7 Year Winter

*From the editor*

You may have noticed the date of our last newsletter. Instead of reading-Fall 1980 it should have read Fall 1986. Of course, there are those who don't believe this was a typographical error. I've been told it was more like a prediction or a warning. "Certainly," they said, "we've had about seven years of snow!"

Thank you for the vote of confidence, but at least we could have spelled Canaan correctly. ■