

# Roading Guidelines for Ceasing Work in High Winds

## Context

High winds create a significant risk to workers in all roading operations. This guidance supports contractors in deciding when conditions become unsafe and work should cease.

Contractors are empowered to stop work at any time if they believe conditions are unsafe. This guideline indicates the upper limit of conditions where work should continue.

Due to the large size of the forest estate, **local conditions may vary significantly**. Crews should monitor weather conditions within their own work area.

Forest closure or severe weather communications may be provided by:

- **Email notifications**
- **E-Text messages**
- **Hourly radio broadcasts via Radio HQ (when required)**

However, **on-site observation remains the most reliable indicator of actual wind conditions**.

## Purpose

This guideline is a tool provided to contractors to help make the call for when conditions become too dangerous for their specific machine operation. However, we want to encourage contractors to make their own call at any time they feel unsafe. This includes identifying areas along your travel route that may be at higher risk than the blocks or areas being worked in. This guideline shows the *maximum* unsafe conditions to continue working in.

## The Beaufort scale

The **Beaufort Scale** estimates wind strength by observing environmental effects such as:

- Tree movement
- Noise through vegetation
- Debris movement

While wind meters are useful, they are **not always practical in the field**, so contractors should use **visual and environmental cues** to assess conditions.

## Wind speeds vs Wind gusts

Wind gusts are typically around 1.3 times stronger than average wind speeds.

This means dangerous gusts may occur before average wind speeds reach the threshold for stopping work. Contractors should consider gusting conditions when assessing risk.

## Travel Route for Emergency Planning

Before starting work in a new block, crews should consider **risks along access and exit routes**, including:

- Old or unstable trees along roads
- Areas prone to windthrow
- Locations where fallen trees could block exit routes

If the **travel route presents higher risk than the work area**, contractors may need to **cease work earlier** to ensure safe exit from the forest.




Where conditions are uncertain, a **precautionary approach should be taken**.

## Resources

Consider checking '[windy.com](https://www.windy.com)' for forecasts and current conditions. This guide is based on the Beaufort Scale.

Response	Beaufort Wind Force (scale)	Wind Speed* (km/h)	Wind Category	Effects on Land
	0	<1	Calm	Still, calm air, smoke will rise vertically.
	1	1-5	Light Air	Rising smoke drifts.
	2	6-11	Light Breeze	Leaves rustle, can feel wind on your face
	3	12-19	Gentle Breeze	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion, light-weight flags extend.
	4	20-28	Moderate Breeze	Small branches are moving. Dust and leaves raised from the ground.
	5	29-38	Fresh Breeze	Small trees begin to sway.
	6	39-49	Strong Breeze	Large branches move, whistling heard in trees, ropes and wires. Signs are hard to put up and blow over.
<b>Cease all work</b>	7	50-61	Moderate or Near Gale	Whole trees (the stem of larger trees) are swaying up to 1m. The wind is making walking more difficult.
	8	62-74	Gale Force	Twigs and small branches are falling from trees. The wind hinders progress when walking.
	9	75-88	Strong Gale	Large branches may break from trees. Structural damage occurs. Things not tied down will blow away.
	10	89-102	Storm	Trees are broken or uprooted (windthrow).

### Decision Support Tool (Based on Beaufort Wind Scale)

	0-4	In most situations, wind will not pose a hazard in forestry operations.
	5	Operations may continue <b>if crews feel safe</b> . Contractors are to prioritise areas that are not as exposed to wind, or around small tree (<7m) blocks.
	6	<b>Alternative tasks. Cease work under or adjacent to trees &gt;7m.</b> Move 2 tree lengths away from old growth. <b>Consider Travel route</b> in case of worsening conditions
	7	<b>Cease all forestry work.</b> Seek shelter a minimum of two tree lengths from standing trees. Recommended to leave forest.
	8-10	<b>Do not enter the forest.</b>