

Wildfire Activity Forecasted into Early Fall

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is forecasting cooler and wetter weather for September and October in British Columbia. While this is positive news for BC Wildfire crews, severe drought conditions persist in many regions, including northeastern and southern BC.

Drought conditions have been ongoing since last winter in high-risk areas. Despite near-normal spring temperatures, several regions experienced drier-than-normal conditions, making them susceptible to wildfires well into the fall.

The ongoing drought heightens the risk of existing or new fires growing, particularly in areas prone to daytime thunderstorms and strong winds.

Given the ongoing risk, staying vigilant in helping to prevent human-caused fires is essential in managing and mitigating wildfire risks in our communities. It is crucial for everyone to prepare for potential impacts that could continue into the fall. You can help by reporting any columns of smoke through the BC Wildfire mobile app (please include photos) or by calling *5555 or 1-800-663-5555.

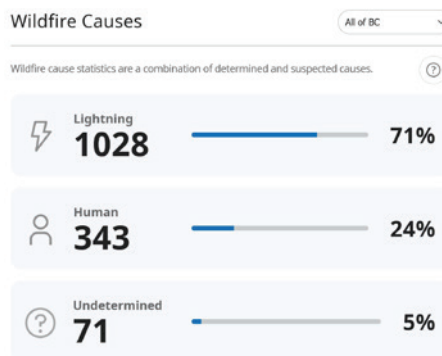


Welcome to the Fall edition of Forest Safety News, covering news about safety topics in forestry. This is YOUR safety newsletter. We look forward to your input and feedback! Email the editor at editor@bcforestsafe.org or call 1-877-741-1060.

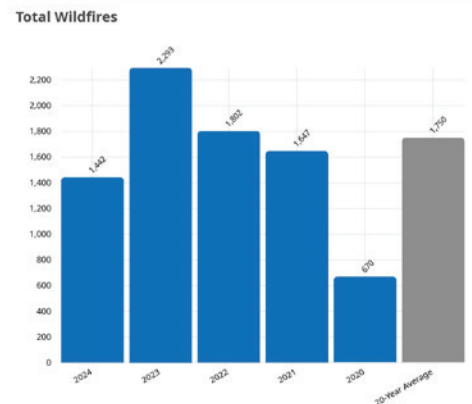
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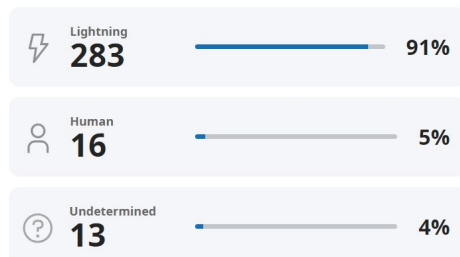
2024 At A Glance



Historical Comparison



Active Wildfires as of August 29, 2024

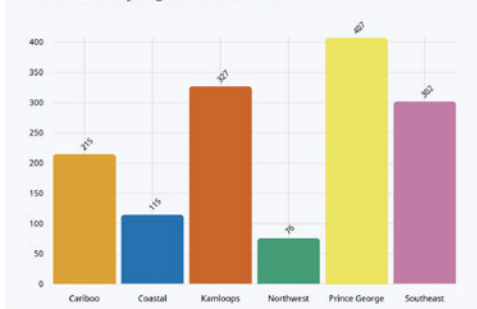


Fire Centre Statistics

The province is divided into six regional fire centres. Each fire centre is responsible for wildfire management within its boundaries.



Total Wildfires by Regional Fire Centre





BC Forest Safety



Celebrating 20 Years of Safety: A Reflection

by Reid Hedlund, BCFSC Board Member

As the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) celebrates its 20th anniversary, board member Reid Hedlund reflects on his two decades of dedication to the organization and the BC forest industry. Reid shares his insights into the necessity of BCFSC, its formation, and the importance of maintaining a strong focus on safety.

In 1999, WorkSafeBC recognized the need for a dedicated safety association for the forest industry, leading to the creation of the Forest Industry Safety Association (FISA). This initiative quickly garnered support from forestry companies across northern and southern interior BC, including members of the Interior Logging Association and the Truck Loggers Association. Reid joined FISA as a Director, helping to shape its early efforts.

FISA and WorkSafeBC began sharing injury and fatality incident details, closely evaluating the data to identify patterns and areas of focus. The urgency of FISA's mission became starkly clear in 2005 when the forest industry faced a crisis with 34 fatalities in a single year. The BC labour minister called in key forestry sector representatives, including support from WorkSafeBC, to develop the Forest Safety Accord. The Accord identified 20 recommendations to establish critical safety protocols to help prevent further tragedies, including the establishment of a dedicated Health and Safety Association focused solely on ensuring forestry workers' safety.

FISA then transitioned into the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC). With coastal forestry involvement, industry leaders and representatives across the province began working as a united front with BCFSC's dedicated staff to collaborate on best practices in safety. This mindset, established in 2004, continues to this day, 20 years later.

However, there were growing pains. It took several years for the industry to fully embrace BCFSC's safety programs, such as SAFE Companies Certification and Faller Certification. These initiatives were initially viewed as time-consuming and detracting from production hours. But once the industry saw the positive results of adopting these safety programs, including a reduction in injury time, it became clear that a strong safety culture was beneficial in the long run.

The journey is far from over. Reid reminds us that there is still progress to be made, especially among smaller employers and contractors (2-5 employees). There is no time to rest on our laurels. We must continue to work together, share information, and make safety the number one priority to ensure every forestry worker goes home safe - every day. 🌲

What's New

Here is the latest on what we have to offer since June 2024. Find direct links to safety alerts, industry-specific resources, industry information and more to download and/or share with employees, industry and safety peers. And make sure to follow us on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest news. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Leadership in Safety Award

Nominations – nominations for leaders in forestry safety. Recognize an individual, crew, team, division, contractor, company, etc. for their commitment to safety in the workplace. Nominations for the Cary White

Lifetime Achievement Award, Forest Safety MSP and Manufacturing MVP are now open. Email your nomination to info@bcforestsafesafe.org.

BCFSC Annual Report – the 2023 BCFSC Annual Report is now available on our website. Read it online or download a copy.

BC Forest Industry Statistics - Lost Time Injury Fact Sheets – Download the 2023 Lost Time Injury Fact Sheets for Harvesting, Manual Tree Felling, Mechanized Harvesting, Log Hauling and more.

Register for the **First Aid: The Latest Updates for BC's Occupational First Aid Regulations** webinar for wood products manufacturing Sept 26 from 10:00am - 11:00am PST. And keep checking the

BCFSC website for information on our First Aid webinar coming up in early October specific to harvesting.

BCFSC FIRS (Forest Industry Reporting System) App – the full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App to manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies Audit submissions.

Training Calendar – Our 2024 Fall Training Calendar is now fully loaded and offers both in-person and online courses. We also provide requested training bringing courses directly to your preferred location at a convenient time that works for you.

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Harvesting Safety



Continued from page 2...

Safety Alerts – Alerts provide timely information on incidents and issues which cause, or result in, serious or fatal injuries. The alerts we send by email and post on our website are intended to raise awareness and educate industry so we can learn from each other’s experience and effort. Here are the latest alerts from BCFSC and industry.

- **BCFSC Safety Alert of the Month** – Click on the link to see the latest monthly safety alert from BCFSC
- **Industry Alert** – Click on the link to see the latest industry provided safety alerts

To subscribe to our safety alert emails – [Click Here](#)

Upcoming Industry Conferences

Wood Pellets Association of Canada (WPAC) AGM & Conference

Sept. 17–18, 2023 | Victoria, BC

BC Safety Committee Conference | October 22, 2024 | Langley, BC

2024 Vancouver Island Safety Conference

Bridging Generations in Today’s Safety Culture | Oct 26, 2024 | Nanaimo, BC

Industry News

Get the latest on industry news from:

WorkSafeBC Enews – subscribe to Insight; WorkSafeBC’s policy, regulation and research division e-Newsletter, Health and Safety Enews, Young Worker Enews and more.

WorkSafe Magazine – WorkSafeBC publishes *WorkSafe Magazine* six times a year to inform, inspire and provide practical tips on a range of topical occupational health and safety matters. It’s free to subscribe and available online.

Tree Frog Forestry News – daily news with top stories and full news stories on the forest sector in North America and around the world.

Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC) – FESBC shares news and information about BC forestry.

Truck Loggers Association (TLA) – a monthly newsletter and 1/4ly magazine (Truck Logger BC) offering stories from BC provincial forestry perspectives, information and updates.

Interior Logging Association – the ILA insider is a 1/4ly newsletter featuring timber harvesting news, information and updates throughout BC.

Western Forestry Contractors’ Association – The Cache is an online space to share wisdom, experience, information, tools and resources generated by the silviculture community.

Wood Products Association of Canada (WPAC) News – read the latest news from WPAC and subscribe to receive the WPAC newsletter.

Industry Links

Road Safety at Work – visit Road Safety at Work for resources, webinars, workshops and news relating to road safety for you and your employees.

WorkSafeBC Announcements – check here for the latest information on WorkSafeBC policy and regulation updates, resource development, risk advisories and more. 🚗

Back to School Road Safety is a Shared Responsibility

As the new school year approaches, the RCMP reminds students, parents, and motorists that we all have a role to play in ensuring students head back to school safely.

School Zone Speed Limits

Drivers are reminded that school zone speed limits of 30 km/hr are in effect on school days. These times can vary across different communities in BC, with some school zones active from 7:30 am to 5 pm, and others from 8 am to 5 pm. Be aware of the specific times for school zones in your area.

Increased Traffic and Vigilance

As kids return to the classroom, we can expect more traffic, school buses, and kids on the roads, especially during rush-hour commutes. Drivers are urged to be cautious and to remain watchful for kids on the roadways. Speeding through school zones and failing to stop for school buses are not only dangerous but also illegal.

Let’s make sure kids have a safe return to school by doing our part to keep our speed down and our eyes on the road. 🚗



Vernon RCMP Photo

A Change of Seasons Brings a Change in Driving

No matter what part of the province you live in, as summer transitions into fall, the coming autumn months will bring rain, fog, and wind, paving the way for winter's snowy and icy conditions. As the roads become slick and visibility is reduced, your vehicle's handling will be put to the test. So, when the rain starts to fall and the fog starts rolling in, remember to drive with extra caution.

Slippery Roads Ahead

Extended dry spells during summer lead to a build-up of substances like oil, grease, rubber, and tar on road surfaces. When the rain begins, this build-up rises to the surface, making roads very slippery.

Hazardous Driving Months

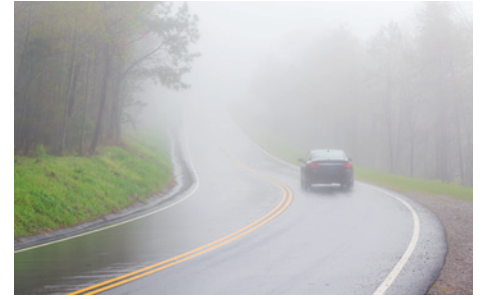
As days get darker earlier and skies turn gray, October, November, and

December become the most dangerous driving months. Nearly 30% of all work-related motor-vehicle incidents resulting in injury and time-loss claims occur during these three months.

Shift Into Winter: Winter Tire Regulations

October 1st marks the day to install winter tires. Here are the Winter Tire Regulations:

- **BC provincial law** requires vehicles to use winter tires from October 1 through April 30 on most highways. The requirement ends March 31 for select highways not traveling through mountain passes or high snowfall areas.
- **Driver Responsibility:** Drivers must understand the conditions on roads they regularly drive and equip their vehicles accordingly.



- **Compliance:** Follow the rules wherever you drive. Check the routes you'll be driving before the October 1 deadline and obey roadside signs.

Learn more about winter driving safety by visiting the [Shift Into Winter website](#) and find out about designated winter tire and chain routes, winter tire regulations and the responsibilities of employers and employees who drive for work. 🚗

VISC is Coming Up October 26th, 2024 – Register Early and You Could Win!

The 2024 Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) is coming up on Saturday, October 26th in Nanaimo at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

This FREE full-day, in-person conference is open to all BC forestry workers and features forestry-related safety topics focussing around this year's theme - *Bridging Generations in Today's Safety Culture*.

VISC features a variety of engaging speakers, a trade show with targeted forestry-related safety products and services as well as:

- Refreshments and lunch for conference attendees
- A silent auction with proceeds to KidSport Nanaimo
- 50/50 draw
- Door prizes and more

This year, VISC features three keynote speakers: health and safety expert [Eldeen Pozniak](#), former US Marine and author of *Core of Four*, [Tim Page-Bottorff](#), and [Tom Wilson](#), who dedicated his life to promoting safety and understanding risk tolerance after surviving a plane crash in 2008 and chronicled his experience in his 2015 book, *Moments of Impact*.



Early Bird Registration

Register before September 15th and you could win a coveted BCFSC Stanfield shirt and toque.

Register online today to save your spot. [Online registration](#)
Registration closes October 14th, 2024

VISC supports the [Nanaimo Loaves & Fishes Community Foodbank](#).

Instead of a conference fee, we kindly ask attendees to bring a non-perishable food item or make a cash donation.

If you have questions regarding registration or sponsorship, contact the VISC steering committee by email training@bcforestsafe.org or call 1-877-741-1060.

Nominate a Safety Leader

For over 16 years, the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) has been recognizing outstanding individual safety achievements in the forestry sector. The Leadership in Safety Awards offer an opportunity to honor those who have dedicated their careers to promoting safety in BC's forestry industry, including harvesting, manufacturing, and lifetime achievements in forestry safety.

These prestigious awards are presented during the Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC). This year, the awards ceremony will take place on Saturday, October 26th, in Nanaimo.

We invite you to nominate a leader in forestry safety. Your nomination can be for an individual, crew, team, division, contractor, company, supplier, consultant, trainer, or any entity that deserves recognition for exceptional safety leadership or achievements. There are three award categories:

1. Cary White Memorial Award

This award honors an individual who has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing safety awareness, expanding safety knowledge, developing safety skills at the ground level, and fostering a lasting culture of safety among BC's forestry workers. This person goes above and beyond to help others achieve their safety goals through their experience, knowledge, and supportive actions.

2. Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP)

This award recognizes an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to forest industry safety within their operation or company. The MVP could be a worker whose idea led to workplace safety improvements, a supervisor who consistently advocates for safe work procedures, a crew that has found ways to work more safely and productively, a manager who has shown a strong commitment to worker safety, a committee that has achieved safety improvements through persistent efforts, or a company that has demonstrated leadership in integrating health and safety into their business practices.



3. Manufacturing Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP)

Similar to the Forest Safety MVP Award, this award acknowledges an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to safety in wood products manufacturing within their organization. Nominate an individual, crew, supervisor, manager, or company that has demonstrated exemplary leadership in implementing safety best practices, protocols, or initiatives and recognize their outstanding contributions to enhancing worker safety.

To nominate someone, simply email us at info@bcforestsafe.org with the following details:

- Nominee's name (first and last)
- Nominee's job title
- Nominee's location and employer
- Nomination category (Cary White Award, Forest Safety MVP, or Manufacturing Safety MVP)
- A detailed description of the reason for the nomination
- Your name and email address

The deadline for nominations is Tuesday, September 24, 2024. 🗓️

WorkSafeBC Updates

Occupational First Aid Regulatory Change Update

WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors has approved amendments to Part 3 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, relating to occupational first aid (OFA). These amendments take effect November 1, 2024.

To assist you in preparing for the new requirements, WorkSafeBC is sharing information about the new workplace first aid curriculum and additional resources to help you understand the first aid regulatory changes.

For detailed information, please see the following on our website:

- [Preliminary OHS Guidelines for Part 3 - Occupational First Aid](#)
- [Backgrounder: Occupational first aid regulatory changes](#)
- [First Aid Requirements](#)

On July 2, 2024, WorkSafeBC made the CSA aligned first aid curriculum available to [training providers](#) in BC. Some providers may still need time to prepare the new courses before they can offer them to the public, consult with your local training provider to ensure they are instructing the new curriculum. However, employers intending to use intermediate attendants in advance of November 1, 2024 must also comply fully with all other requirements in the amended regulation, including, implementation of written first aid assessments and written first aid procedures – this is to accommodate changes to the revised Schedule 3-A, as the existing 5-day OFA Level 2 program is being replaced with a 2-day Intermediate first aid course, prompting adjustments to the minimum requirements.

All OFA certificates valid until their expiry date

All OFA certificates are still valid until their expiry date. After October 31, active OFA certificates will become equivalent to basic, intermediate, and advanced certificates.

This means there will be OFA certificates expiring after the regulatory changes come into effect November 1, 2024. For example, an OFA 2 certificate issued April 9, 2024, will be valid until April 9, 2027.

Extensions for expiring OFA 2 certificates

OFA 2 certificates expiring between July 2 and October 30, 2024, will be accepted as valid through October 31. You do not need to hold an Intermediate certificate until November 1. However, you must successfully complete the Intermediate course by October 31 to work as an intermediate attendant beginning November 1. This provision does not apply to OFA 1 or OFA 3.

OFA training ends August 31

Training providers who currently offer the WorkSafeBC OFA courses will no longer offer them after August 31, 2024. Starting September 1, 2024, providers will exclusively offer CSA-aligned programs.

WorkSafeBC Resources

Updated OHS Guidelines and backgrounder

WorkSafeBC has developed an OHS Guidelines to assist in the application and interpretation of changes to the OHS Regulation. A preliminary revised [OHS Guidelines for Part 3 - Occupational First Aid](#) has been posted to the WorkSafeBC website.

There is also an updated [Backgrounder: Occupational first aid regulatory changes](#) to reflect the preliminary guidelines.

Workplace first aid assessment worksheet

Effective November 1, 2024, employers will have a duty to establish their workplace first aid requirements in consultation with their workers. Employers will need to complete a written first aid assessment for each workplace.

This written assessment will help employers determine the appropriate first aid services needed to ensure prompt first aid treatment and transport to a medical facility. WorkSafeBC has published a [First Aid Assessment Worksheet](#) to document the minimum and additional first aid services required for your workplace.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

WorkSafeBC has developed an [FAQ](#) on the upcoming changes to occupational first aid requirements. The FAQ includes key changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, outlines what kind of vehicles are acceptable as emergency transport, and when you may need to develop first aid procedures that account for hospital closures and diversions.

Video resource coming in the fall

WorkSafeBC is currently developing a video resource to provide you with detailed information regarding the changes. Topics include changes to first aid assessments; training and credentials; equipment requirements; and workplace factors (including remote and less accessible workplaces). 🎥

WorkSafeBC Updates

WorkSafeBC Psychological Health and Safety Webpage

WorkSafeBC has announced the launch of a dedicated [Psychological Health and Safety webpage](#). This webpage can be used to learn more about psychological health and safety, WorkSafeBC's mental health strategy, and find helpful resources. Take a look at WorkSafeBC's newest resource – [Framework for Success](#) – that builds upon the three principles identified in the Mental Health Strategy and introduces five categories of psychosocial hazards.

The establishment of this webpage and key resource are significant milestones for WorkSafeBC. These two items are critical to positioning the work that will be done for years to come. The journey to this point has included many internal and external stakeholders, and WorkSafeBC looks forward to continued collaborations moving forward. 🌱

Board of Directors Decision - Permanent Disability Evaluation Schedule Policy Updates — Ongoing Review

On July 11, 2024, WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved amendments to the Permanent Disability Evaluation Schedule (Appendix 3) of the Rehabilitation Services & Claims Manual, Volume II, to enhance clarity and administrative efficiency for the loss of strength rating process. 🌱

BC Government Ends Public Health Emergency for COVID-19

On July 26, 2024, Dr. Bonnie Henry, British Columbia's provincial health officer, ended the public health emergency for COVID-19 and rescinded all related orders.

As a result, a presumption that a claim for COVID-19 is work-related will no longer apply if the exposure occurred on or after July 26, 2024. Going forward, COVID-19 related claims will be adjudicated by WorkSafeBC on the same basis as other communicable disease 🌱

WorkSafeBC Holds Preliminary Average Base Premium Rate Flat for Employers in 2025

In July, WorkSafeBC announced that the preliminary average base premium rate for 2025 will remain unchanged at 1.55% of employers' assessable payroll. Subject to final approvals by WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors, this will be the eighth year in a row that the average base rate has remained at this level. 🌱

WorkSafeBC Magazine Summer 2024

Feature articles:

- Innovative safety tech built on firm ground
- Safety for roadside workers is a two-way street
- Protecting workers from wildfire smoke and heat stress

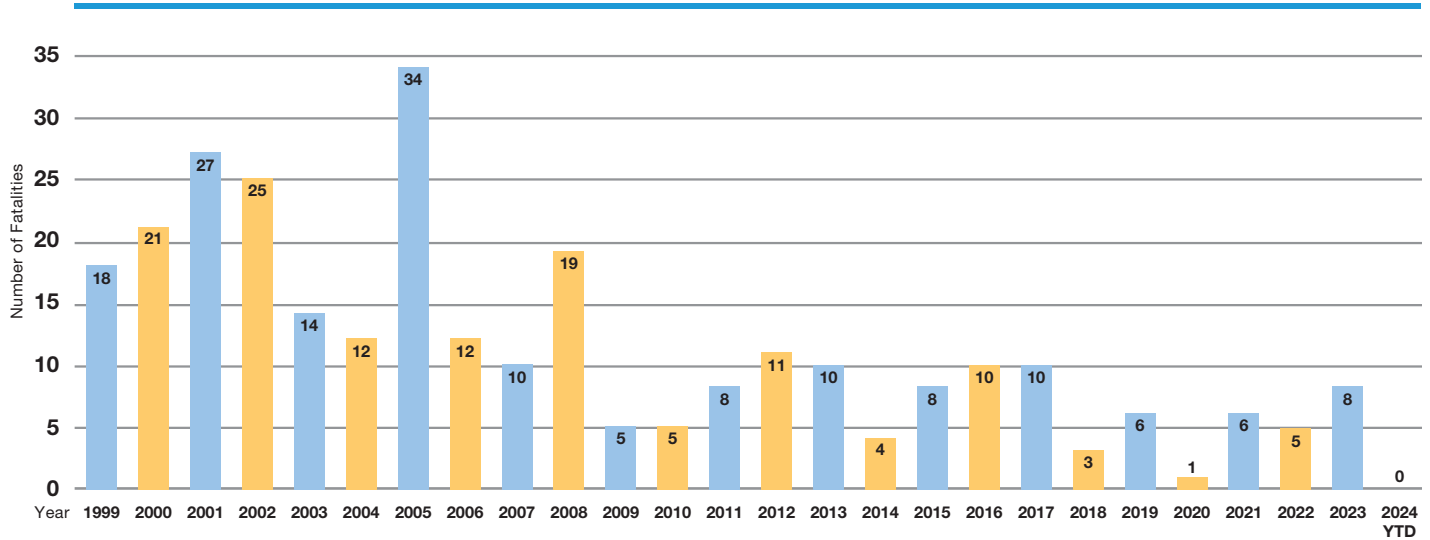
Get more WorkSafeBC Updates and News [here](#). 🌱



Work-Related Deaths & Injuries



WSBC Accepted Harvesting Work-related Death Claims



This information represents the number of work-related deaths by year in BC, up until September 2024.

For 2024 year-to-date, there have been no work-related deaths in the BC forestry industry.

Recent work-related incidents reported to WorkSafeBC

The following sample of work-related incidents recently reported to WorkSafeBC may help prevent similar incidents in your workplace.

HARVESTING

Injury: Injury to head, fracture

Core Activity: Manual tree falling

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: June 2024

A worker was manually falling a tree (26m tall). As the tree fell, it struck a stump, causing the butt of the falling tree to kick upward and backward. The tree struck the worker, who then fell down a small hill.

Injury: Injuries to head and upper body
Core Activity: Integrated forest management

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: May 2024

A worker was conducting logging activities on a steep slope (measured at 52%) when the machine they were

operating lost traction and tipped over. Co-workers extricated the worker from the machine via the roof hatch

Injury: Fractures

Core Activity: Helicopter logging / Manual tree falling and bucking

Location: Vancouver Island/Coastal BC

Date of Incident: May 2024

A worker was completing a bucking cut on partially suspended hemlock log when the log pivoted. It struck the worker as they retreated along their designated escape route.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Log processing

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: April 2024

A worker in a feller buncher was cutting trees near power lines and within the limits of approach. A tree limb inadvertently contacted a 14.4 kV line. The worker was able to walk the machine away from the line, and the utility owner subsequently repaired and re-energized the line.

Injury: Fractures, contusions

Core Activity: Integrated forest management

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: April 2024

The operator of a grapple skidder lost control of the machine on a slope (approx. 30%) while grappling logs. The grapple skidder rolled over several times and came to rest against standing trees at the edge of the cutblock, about 30m downslope from where control was lost.

MANUFACTURING

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Wooden component manufacture

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: July 2024

A forklift picked a load, then reversed and struck an adjacent worker.

Injury: Fractures

Core Activity: Sawmill

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: June 2024

A worker was on a log deck, using a power saw to cut wood planking to reconstruct the deck. The worker fell through the deck to the ground, about 16ft below.

Continued on page 9...

Continued from page 8...

Injury: Electric shock, injuries to fingers (2 workers)

Core Activity: Sawmill

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: June 2024

After a wheel grind, two workers were trying to re-install a local disconnect box on the fixed portion of the re-saw hood when they experienced an electric shock.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Pressed wood product manufacture

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: June 2024

At a pellet manufacturing facility, a fire broke out inside a belt drier. The deluge system activated automatically and extinguished the flames. No workers were injured, and no emergency services were called.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Wooden component manufacture

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: June 2024

After hours, a fire broke out in a cyclone hopper at a truck loading area. The fire engulfed the hopper and a transport truck, both containing wood shavings and coarse sawdust. The fire department responded and extinguished the fire.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Pressed wood product manufacture

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: May 2024

A worker observed a fire in the wood dust on the exterior of a triple-pass rotary dryer. Workers contacted the fire department and followed the employer's emergency evacuation procedures. The fire department extinguished the fire.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Pressed wood product manufacture

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: April 2024

A fire started on the flatbed dryer of an operating pellet mill. The heat detection sensor engaged, the deluge system in the mill was activated, and the fire department responded. No workers were injured.

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Pressed wood product manufacture

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: April 2024

Workers were operating a wood pellet manufacturing facility when the heat sensors detected a fire. The plant was immediately shut down and the #1 pallet mill was flooded with water. A fire patrol was initiated for two hours, and no hot spots were identified by thermal camera. No workers were injured, and only minor equipment damage was reported.

Injury: Injuries to fingers

Core Activity: Wooden component manufacture

Location: Interior B.C.

Date of Incident: April 2024

A worker was dislodging a trim block when one of their hands contacted a rotating saw blade.

TRANSPORTATION

Injury: Injuries to the head

Core Activity: Cable or hi-lead logging

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: May 2024

An off-highway log hauler (fat truck) was descending a section of a forestry service road where the incline grade was 30%. As it descended, the truck left the main travel surface of the road and collided with the high-side bank. It came to rest about 15m beyond where it initially contacted the bank.

Injury: Multiple injuries

Core Activity: Wooden component manufacture

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: Feb 2024

A worker was on a ladder tarping down the load on a tractor-trailer unit when they fell to the ground.

INCIDENT FINDINGS

The summary of findings from a [2021 incident investigation](#) into a 2021 fatality involving a service contractor at a wood products manufacturing facility has now been posted on WorkSafeBC's website.

The summary of findings from a [2021 incident investigation](#) into an incident involving a firefighter being seriously injured during controlled burnoff has now been posted on WorkSafeBC's website. 🚒



Celebrating BCFSC's Long-standing SAFE Certified Companies

In April 2004, the provincial government's Forest Safety Task Force was established to address the alarming number of injuries and fatalities in the forestry sector. The task force identified two key outcomes: the adoption of a Health and Safety Accord for the BC Forestry Industry and the creation of the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC), a dedicated Health and Safety Association for BC's forest industry.

One of the initial tasks was to develop a mandatory safety program for all forestry employers. This program emphasized a commitment to health and safety for all workers, including direct employees, contractors, sub-contractors, and others providing services to owners, tenure holders, and licensees across the province.

It became clear that companies with a strong safety record should be prioritized for forestry work contracts and the Task Force recommended a pre-qualification safety management system to ensure a minimum safety standard for bidding on forestry work in BC. BCFSC was tasked with developing this safety system evaluation program.

BCFSC collaborated with industry representatives and key stakeholders to identify industry standards and markers of good safety practices. After two years of development, SAFE (Safety Accord Forestry Enterprise) Companies Certification was launched in 2006, and companies meeting the audit requirements were awarded SAFE Certification. By 2009, SAFE Certification became a pre-requisite for forestry companies ranging from Independent Owner Operators (IOOs) to large companies and even publicly held companies, to bid on contracts. Companies achieving SAFE Certification also became eligible for COR certification from WorkSafeBC.

As we celebrate 20 years of service to BC's forestry sector, BCFSC acknowledges the forestry companies that embraced SAFE Certification early on and remain SAFE Certified to this day:

- Balcaen Consolidated Contracting Ltd.
- B.R.I. Security and Consulting Services Ltd.
- Lo-Bar Log Transport Co. Ltd.
- Sibola Mountain Falling Ltd.

- Munson Equipment (1992) Ltd.
- JoR Contracting Ltd.
- Sitka Silviculture Ltd.
- Weyerhaeuser - Princeton Timberlands
- District of Mission (Forestry Operations)

We spoke with Bruce and Jayne Ingram from B.R.I. Security and Consulting Services, one of BCFSC's first 50 SAFE Certified IOOs, about their long-standing commitment to safety and why they became SAFE Certified.

Bruce and Jayne began BRI Security in 2004. Bruce explained, "We were contracted by TimberWest to provide security for their forestry sites. It was a requirement for any contractors working with them to have SAFE Certification. As a contracted security company, we weren't working as forestry workers per se, but we felt that meeting the regulatory safety protocols would help us understand the perils a forestry site could face."

The Ingrams agreed that the training courses and support from BCFSC staff were invaluable in understanding their role as contractors. Bruce continued, "The expertise we acquired through the training and audit process gave us the knowledge to assist TimberWest and other contractors on site with their safety protocol checklists to maintain compliance."

Jayne added, "As a security company, we had other regulations to adhere to as well, but we felt it was necessary to also meet the forestry site safety requirements. If forestry contractors must be SAFE Certified, then so do we."

As Jayne and Bruce prepare to retire after 20 years in business, they leave us with these parting words: "The SAFE Certification program is essential for your safety and everyone else's. We highly recommend it. Whenever you need help, BCFSC is there. Just pick up the phone and call. They will work with you, not against you, to ensure you have all the information you need to meet the requirements."

We wish Bruce and Jayne the best in their future endeavors.

If you would like to reach out to a SAFE Companies team member, call us at 1.877.741.1060 or email us at safecompanies@bcforestsafes.org.

Reminder: Year-end Audit Due Date is Changing to Nov 30th

BCFSC would like to remind companies whose audits have previously been submitted in December to adjust their timelines to submit their year-end audit by November 30th. This means that all audits normally submitted in December will now need to be completed (last day of data collection for BASE) by November 30th.

This updated year-end audit due date was adjusted last February in consultation with the SAFE Companies Advisory Committee and BCFSC Program Committee.

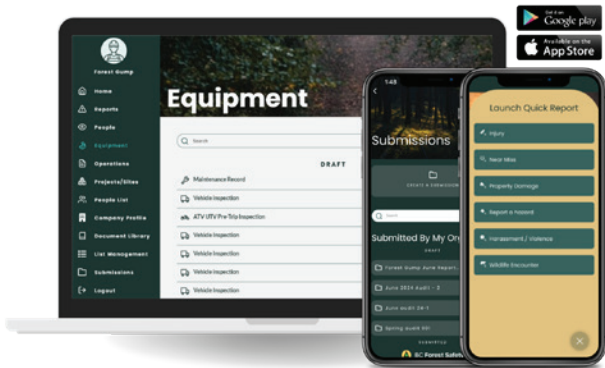
The new audit due date will benefit employers and BCFSC by:

1. Providing employers that normally submit an audit in December with additional time to achieve a successful audit result and be eligible for the COR incentive.
2. Reducing pressure on external auditors to complete audits in December.
3. Allowing BCFSC staff to schedule site visits earlier in the year which will benefit injury reduction with workers.
4. Alleviating the significant audit review surge in January and February providing BCFSC staff with an opportunity to focus on preparing the COR incentive forecast for WorkSafeBC.

2024 will be a transition year as employers and auditors adjust to accommodate the November 30th due date. New Certifications or vital Re-certifications to reacquire SAFE Certification in December will continue to be accepted. If you have questions, email SAFE Companies or for more information, visit the BCFSC website.

Use the BCFSC FIRS App for Your Audit Submission

The BCFSC Forest Industry Reporting System (FIRS) is now fully operational and ready to assist with your SAFE Companies audit requirements.



- **View Training Records and Certifications:** Scan the QR code located in the profile section of the FIRS app to see active, expiring soon, and expired training records and certifications.
- **Role-based Permissions for Enhanced Security:** Efficiently manage role-based tasks and information access with different levels of permissions.
- **Bundled PDF Printing:** Save and print your reports and records in PDF format.

Additional Features

The BCFSC FIRS App also includes several additional features to enhance efficiency and organization:

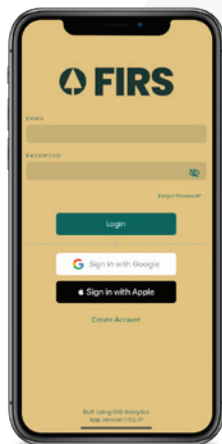
- **Automated Notifications:** System-generated alerts keep you updated when new reports and tasks are created.
- **Voice-to-Text:** Utilize talk-to-text functionality to reduce manual typing. Simply talk to document safety reports efficiently.
- **Offline Functionality:** Supports data entry even without an internet connection, automatically syncing your data once you reconnect.



This innovative forms management tool is specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of the forest industry. It is designed to streamline the paperwork and administrative tasks required for audit submissions and is FREE for all SAFE Certified Companies. The app is user-friendly, easy to set up, and available for download on both Android and iOS devices via the App Store. Additionally, FIRS offers a desktop dashboard that allows administrators to access uploaded submissions, generate reports, and create document bundles.

Key Features of the BCFSC FIRS App

- **Simplified Record-Keeping:** Automates the storage of SAFE Companies forms, including incidents, site inspections, first aid assessments, worker orientations, and worker observations for workforce development.
- **Accessible Work Procedures:** Provides field access to company Safe Work Procedures, both online and offline via the in-app Document Library.
- **Effortless Reporting:** *FIRS enables quick report submission and photo documentation directly from the field.* Pick and choose records and reports from your FIRS app to send to clients, and other stakeholders.



Getting Started with the BCFSC FIRS App

The BCFSC FIRS App is available for download on both Android and iOS devices through the App Store. Here's how to get started:

1. Search for 'BCFSC FIRS' and install the app.
2. To begin using the app, a FIRS account is required. For enhanced security, the BCFSC will verify your SAFE Certified Company status upon receiving your registration request at FIRS@bcforestsafesafe.org.
3. Once your registration is reviewed and approved by the BCFSC, your account will be set up, and you will receive an invitation email.
4. Follow the instructions provided to activate your FIRS account with your registration details.

For further questions or information about the BCFSC FIRS App, visit the [FIRS webpage](#) or email FIRS@bcforestsafesafe.org.



Gary Bauer Retires from Falling Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC)

During the March meeting, Gary Bauer announced his retirement from FTAC after many years as a dedicated member. Gary was one of the founding members of FTAC and worked on numerous initiatives with the Committee.

Gary addressed the committee saying that “Bill Bolton asked if I would be interested in joining FTAC. Some of the meetings had about 100 people and they got pretty riled up and very interesting. I’ve met a lot of interesting people over the last 20 years, and worked with some great people during that time, way too many to mention! It’s time that I moved on, passing the torch to the younger generation.



Big mistake we made in 2003 when we started certifying fallers, we didn’t certify the bullbuckers. We had all these fallers out there that had certification but the people that were supervising them had no certification. We realized about 7 years that we had made this mistake, and that’s when in 2010 we developed the bullbucker certification.

The key to keeping our people safe is to have good, trained people, and to have good people supervising. People that can make hard decisions, that know how to mentor people, and people that know how to talk to people and have hard conversations. Combination of these three things will keep our people safe out there”.

Gary thanked the group for having him as a member.

Co-Chair Dazy Weymer commented “Gary and I have been involved with FTAC from the very early days. I kind of think both of us got involved largely because of industry deaths and the devastation that goes along with each one of them, all in the hopes that we could maybe do something to prevent future accidents from occurring.

An advantage of having a group like the FTAC is the diversity of experiences and the opinions that are shared. I’ve always appreciated that Gary often looks at things through a slightly different lens. That and the fact that he is never afraid to speak his mind. I do feel that sometimes people have ideas that might not be in line with what the main group seems to be thinking and may not speak up. Whenever Gary had ideas that maybe went a little bit against the flow, the rest of us always had an opportunity to hear those ideas, which I very much appreciated.

There is no doubt that Gary’s heart is in the right place for what this group stands for – preventing accidents and getting fallers home safely. He has put in his time, made a big contribution and he will be missed. Thank you, Gary, for everything that you have done”.

Scott Rushton went on to say “Thank you for your time, energy and passion that you have put in over the years, never mind just with the FTAC group. It takes a special person to have your passion, so I thank you for that”.

On behalf of FTAC and the BC Forest Safety Council, we wish Gary all the best in his future endeavours! 🎉



Celebrating 20 Years of Dedication and Safety: A Look Back at BCFSC's Journey

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we take a moment to reflect on the dedication and hard work that have shaped the British Columbia Forest Safety Council (BCFSC). The recommendations set forth by the Forest Safety Task Force in their 2004 report laid the groundwork for BCFSC's mission to reduce fatalities and injuries in BC's Forest sector. These recommendations continue to be the cornerstone of our efforts today.

The early days were challenging at times but also exciting with everyone striving to improve the forest industry's abysmal safety record. Figuring out the path forward was no small feat. Bill Bolton was the dedicated Falling Manager, and a senior advisor for Forest Worker Development initiatives. He was a pivotal leader, particularly in improving hand faller safety. His endless energy, passion and good humor were instrumental in navigating the challenges of those formative years. Together with BCFSC Directors and staff, Bill achieved remarkable milestones. Here are some falling program highlights that Bill helped develop and implement during his time with BCFSC:

- **New Faller Training:** BCFSC's New Faller Training Program and the support of the up to 180 days of on-the-job training.
- **QST Program:** Direction and oversight of the Qualified Supervisor Trainer (QST) program.
- **Supervisor Training:** Creation and implementation of the BCFSC Falling Supervisor Training Course, leading to eventual certification.
- **Faller Certification:** Direction and oversight of the BCFSC Faller Certification process.
- **Faller Blasting:** Efforts to improve access to faller blasting and blasting training for certified fallers.
- **Fatalities and Investigations Support:** Providing crucial support in the event of fatalities and investigations.
- **Chainsaw Training:** Development and implementation of the Basic Chainsaw Operator Program, along with other chainsaw initiatives.
- **Faller Industry Alignment:** Collaboration with WorkSafeBC, the Oil & Gas sector, and the BC Wildfire Service.
- **Falling Technical Advisory Committee:** Establishment of a committee to provide industry input into BCFSC Falling Programs.
- **Key Testimony:** Providing essential testimony in coroner inquests and inquiries, leading to recommendations for worker safety.

Several of Bill's former colleagues shared their insights on Bill's invaluable contributions to faller safety:

Jake vanDort, BCFSC Certified Faller *"Not only a shining example of how a safety advocate should carry themselves, but Bill is also genuinely dedicated to workplace safety. I've learned many technical lessons from Bill but perhaps the biggest lesson was learning how to win people over and get them to "buy in". Bill would choose the loudest opponent during one of his many excellent presentations and engage them by asking them how they would rectify the situation. Afterwards he would praise their solutions and continue to include them by asking their opinion. By the end of the presentation Bill had usually gained yet another ally in his movement to forward awareness of new occupational health and safety innovations. Bill to me is a mentor, guiding light, and great friend."*



Wade Marling, OSO WorkSafeBC *"I am proud to say that I had the opportunity to work with Bill Bolton at WorkSafeBC from 2013 until 2018. While working with Bill in the Fort St John region, he provided me mentoring and guidance to ensure I worked to my full potential and provide the workers, supervisors, and employers the best possible service that we could. Prior to working with Bill Bolton while he worked for WorkSafeBC, I worked with Bill when he was working at the BC Forest Safety Council. Bill played the key and # 1 role in implementing faller certification and the application of the BC Faller Training Standard. There is no other person in British Columbia that has done more advocating for the safety of fallers than Bill Bolton. Bill has become a true family friend and I look forward to working with Bill in the future. Congratulations on your amazing career Bill."*

Jeff Mackenzie, BCFSC Certified Faller & QST *"A number of years ago I was asked to participate in a Dacum with a number of falling supervisors. Bill was the chair of this project, to determine what roles and responsibilities a falling supervisor does. It was clear from the start of this process that he had a passion and commitment to safety"*

Continued on page 14...

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when it concerned hand falling. Since then, I've had the pleasure of working with and sharing experiences with him on a professional level and a personal one."

Allison Thompson, BCFSC Manager, Training and Standards "I will always appreciate the time I spent working with Bill. His vision and enthusiasm were truly infectious, inspiring everyone to do whatever it took to bring his plans to life. Along the way, Bill shared his knowledge and trained us, guiding each new initiative. Every day, we moved one step closer to the much-improved safety record the industry enjoys today."

Gary Banys, BCFSC Training Logistics Coordinator "I started working at the BCFSC in March 2005. Bill was my manager, and we were launching the Faller Certification Program. His experience and credibility as a faller, combined with his knowledge as an OSO with WorkSafeBC, gave BCFSC a solid foundation to build programs that are still relevant to this day. In those early years, it was sometimes challenging to convince the falling sector of the benefit and need for certification (which also called for improvements for supervisors). Bill was always up to the challenge and over time, he proved convincing and established himself as a fierce advocate of faller safety. Bill truly cared about the fallers and was never shy about expressing his views. He could talk the talk because he walked the walk, and I consider myself fortunate to have worked with Bill for many years. He's someone I call a friend to this day."

Terry Anonson, OSO WorkSafeBC "Although it's been many years since falling certification and standardized new faller training was implemented, it is not lost to me and many others in the industry that Bill was the driving force behind this important process and we all to this day give full credit to Bill and his effort for drastically improving faller safety and preventing needless faller injuries and fatalities."

"Working with Bill either in the field certifying fallers or inspecting fallers or working with Bill in meetings or workshops, Bill's number

one agenda was always faller safety first and he was fearless in achieving that objective, regardless of the roadblocks in front of him"

"It was always a good learning experience working with Bill. His coaching and mentorship with respect to the falling standard and faller safety has always guided and helped me through my role as a safety officer in the falling industry. Thanks Bill"

Mikael Jonsson, BCFSC Certified Faller & QST "Everybody knows that Bill was the "spear leader" of the BC Faller Training Standard. To me he was a great mentor but also a great listener which made him a great team player. He was open minded and still sticking to his principles. We are all better/safer fallers thanks to Bill's contribution to the BC Faller Training Standard."

As we celebrate this 20-year milestone, we honour the progress Bill made and the unwavering commitment to safety that continues to drive BCFSC forward and thank him for his contributions to faller safety. His dedication and leadership were exactly what we needed to succeed. Here's to many more years of dedication and achievement in forest safety. 🍷





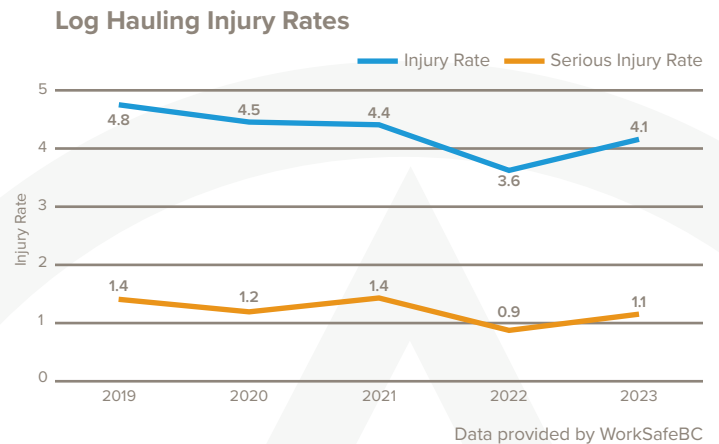
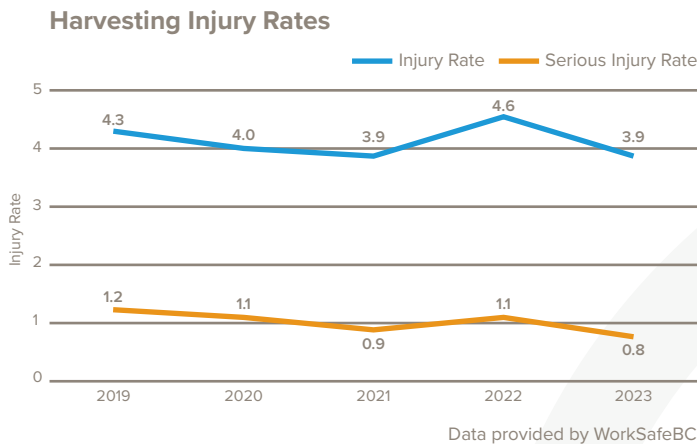
Trucking and Harvesting Advisory Group (TAG)

The Trucking Advisory Group (TAG) was established in 2013, bringing industry representatives together to support much needed improvements in log hauling safety. TAG members include representatives from BC’s major forest licensees, forest industry contractor associations, such as the Truck Loggers Association (TLA) and Interior Logging Association (ILA), the Log Truck Technical Advisory Committee (LTTAC), log hauling contractors and the BC Forest Safety Council.

Despite TAG’s continued work and successes in the log hauling sector, members identified there was a significant level of serious injuries and fatalities within the other areas of forest development such as harvesting and silviculture. So in the spring of 2016, TAG expanded its scope to include timber harvesting and renamed itself the “The Trucking and Harvesting Advisory Group”.

To support and promote safety improvements, TAG has developed numerous resources including industry best practices, operational objectives, incident data, videos, posters, technical reports, and safe work procedures. The group also focuses on direct engagement with forest industry workers, contractors, and regulatory agencies to raise more awareness.

Thanks to its continuous efforts, TAG has seen great success in reduced safety incidents in both log hauling and harvesting, achieving historically low injury rates over consecutive years.



Despite its successes, TAG recognizes that there is still significant work to be done to further reduce and eliminate injuries and fatalities within the log hauling and harvesting sectors. To help guide these objectives, the group develops and approves an annual workplan. The 2024 workplan has identified log load securement, log truck driver training, emergency response planning, log trailer molly’s, and engagement with contractors and provincial regulators as key priorities.

TAG is committed to continuing its work to improve worker safety within the forest industry now and in the foreseeable future. For further information, please visit the [Trucking and Harvesting Advisory Group \(TAG\)](#) web page on the BCFSC website or contact BCFSC Transportation Safety at Transport@bcfortestsafe.org or call us at 250-562-3215. 🌲

Load Securement Project

- Phase Two & Three Updates

In 2021, the Load Securement Working Group (a subcommittee of the BC Forest Safety Council Log Truck Technical Advisory Committee - LTTAC) initiated a multi-year project to explore potential solutions that could help reduce or eliminate the risk of musculoskeletal injuries associated with the traditional motion of throwing and securing log load wrappers.

Results of phase two of the Load Securement Project, where the top six alternative methods and tools identified were ranked based on Movement Risk Score (MRS) reduction and ease of use were published in the [September 2023 BCFSC Forest Safety Newsletter](#).

The Phase Two Report prepared by [FPIInnovations](#) contains a set of Contractor Toolboxes for each of the top six alternative methods. The toolboxes are resources that employers and drivers can use to address the risk of injury from load securement activities based on their operational needs and preferences. Each toolbox includes descriptions for use, musculoskeletal injury (MSI) risk reduction measures, time requirements for use, estimated costs, safe work procedures, risk exposure, risk controls and other implementation resources. The complete set of toolbox resources are available for download from the BCFSC Website:

[ContractorToolboxA_ImprovedThrowingMethodC.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

[ContractorToolboxB_UnderhandThrowUsingLeadRope.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

[ContractorToolboxC_ThrowAssistUsingaPole.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

[ContractorToolboxD_RotatorSaver.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

[ContractorToolboxE_LightweightWrappersOrTiedowns.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

[ContractorToolboxF_ElevatedPlatform.pdf \(bcforestsafe.org\)](#)

To further enhance the effectiveness of the toolbox resources, videos demonstrating proper technique for four of the alternative methods have also been developed. The videos are available on the [BC Forest Safety Council - YouTube Channel](#) and were first introduced to the BC Forest Sector in the [June 2024 BCFSC Forest Safety Newsletter](#). Links to the individual videos can also be found on the BCFSC website:

[Toolbox A - Improved Throwing Method Demonstration Video](#)

[Toolbox B - Underhand Throw Using Lead Rope Demonstration Video](#)

[Toolbox C - Throw Assist Using A Pole Demonstration Video](#)

[Toolbox F - Elevated Platform Demonstration Video](#)

Phase three of the project is underway with pilot programs of auto load securement systems ([ExTe Com 90 - Remote Controlled Load Securing](#) and [RaptorSafe - Auto Tensioning System](#)) to field test in a variety of BC weather conditions over multiple seasons. Reports and results of the pilot program outcomes will be produced and published in the spring/summer of 2025. 🚧





Rainfall Events – Operational Management and Safety Considerations

Climate change and seemingly more frequent extreme weather events are affecting the safety and performance of forest infrastructure and operations in diverse and unexpected ways. In some cases, the results include increased safety risks for road users, structure failure rates and maintenance costs. Tenure holders need to understand how climate change, and rainfall events in particular, can affect the safety of their forest operations, and what they can do to prepare for, and respond to those events.

For purposes of this guide, rainfall events are defined as:

- extremely high rainfall in a 24-hour period,
- sustained rainfall in a 3-day period,
- antecedent rainfall followed by a heavy rain event,
- rain on snow, and,
- rapid snowmelt

Climate change may bring increased stream peak flows and flashiness. Heavy rains can carry debris which plugs and/or damages stream crossing structures (bridges and culverts). Ditches may be overwhelmed during rain events resulting in backed up culverts, compromised ditch-blocks, and water pooling on roads. Road washouts can occur quickly and may surprise drivers. Soil next to bridges and culverts may be eroded by heavy

rains and high stream flows. Be cautious and assess crossings from a safe distance before driving over them. Travelling in the dark during heavy rain events is not recommended. Limited visibility can result in not being able to spot washouts in time to stop safely.

Tenure holders need to anticipate current and forecasted changes in temperature and precipitation and the implications these changes may have on resource road infrastructure and management. This information is necessary to identify and adapt methods to plan, build, maintain and deactivate resource roads so they are resilient to climate change. Will climate in your area be getting hotter, drier, wetter? How will you need to adjust your management activities?

A key step is to create an accurate, up-to-date inventory and performance assessment of existing resource road infrastructure held under your tenure. Then, risk-rate those roads and develop a road inspection schedule based on risk (i.e., inspect high risk sections annually and after rain events). Document road and infrastructure condition and use this information to prioritize the form, timing, and location of maintenance activities to anticipate future maintenance needs. Consider engaging with a **Professional Geotechnical Engineer** to help identify high hazard areas and prescribe mitigative measures.

Tenure holders should review and record the number, location, and diameter of existing structures and re-evaluate the ability of current culverts and bridges to adequately pass or accommodate flood conditions and increased water flow, bedload, and debris. Ensure that water crossings on winter roads can accommodate flows from early thaws or from rain-on-snow events. Review current guidelines on cross-drain culvert placement (Section 3.6.4 Ministry of Forests Engineering Manual), spacing and sizing. Given predicted frequency of peak events, it may be necessary to increase the number and size of cross-drain culverts to accommodate higher flows and more debris and, thereby, reduce the likelihood of washouts.

Remove water crossing structures if a road is expected to be inactive for an extended period. If ongoing maintenance of the water crossing and drainage structures won't or can't be regularly done, consider removing all or some of the structures to reduce maintenance issues and prevent road washouts.

Rainfall events are often accompanied by strong winds that increase windthrow risks and the hazards of danger tree failure. Soils are weaker when they are saturated and combined with strong winds, leave trees within

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cutblocks, or along road right of ways more susceptible to blowdown. Operations in areas with leave trees should be curtailed during extreme rain and wind events.

Legacy roads are those roads on the land that are not permitted and generally not maintained. They may have been constructed several decades ago and have never been deactivated. They may have drainage structures that are no longer functional, especially during peak rainfall events. Consequently, these roads may be at a higher risk of failing in extreme rain events. As a tenure holder, it's in your best interest to be aware of any legacy roads when developing a nearby area and determining whether any intervention is required to prevent a potential failure. Again, using the services of a **Professional Geotechnical Engineer** may be necessary.

Discourage the use of **plastic culverts** in wildfire prone areas. If plastic pipes are used, install non-flammable segments on the ends of the pipe.

Optimize the number and spacing of roads (often measured as **road density**) to ensure that the least amount of road is constructed and maintained to support the required economic, recreational, and community/wildfire access activities in the area. Minimize your liabilities - if you no longer need a road, stabilize/deactivate it so you minimize the likelihood that it will be a problem during peak events.

Budget for summer and winter **road maintenance** activities to better manage risk.

- Seed erodible ditches and side slopes. Ensure that erosion resistant materials and slope stabilization methods are implemented in and around cross drain culverts.
- In landslide prone areas, implement enhanced erosion and stabilization techniques, such as armoring and vegetating slopes, and, especially, the toes of slopes.
- Reduce the erosive capacity of roadside ditch water through the effective use of diversion ditches to move the water away from the road. Ensure the use of adequately sized ditch blocks in ditches to direct ditch water into cross drains and prevent its concentration.
- Inspect deactivated roads from time-to-time to ensure they are functioning as expected.
- Be familiar with hauling regulations, allowable truck weights and truck haul configurations. Regulations such as spring haul restriction periods and winter weight premiums can be important factors when planning heavy vehicle hauls and management of the resource road infrastructure during certain periods of the year.

Tenure holders need to consider the implications of climate change and extreme weather events on safety

within their forestry operations, from initial planning and design to implementation and maintenance. Extreme events are more likely in the years ahead. This article by no means covers every scenario but is intended to encourage tenure holders consider how climate change will impact their operations and the safety of all road users.

Links:

[Climate Vulnerability Forest Management Tool \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

[Research Report \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://gov.bc.ca)

[Microsoft Word - 19-214 MFNRORD Southern Engineering Gp Wet Weather Shutdown Criteria - FINAL.docx \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[Climate change adaptation for resource roads - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[FOR Engineering Manual - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[List of Automated Snow Weather Stations - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[Data - AQUARIUS WebPortal \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) 🌐

The Rise of Aggressive Driving and How to Avoid It



Aggressive driving has become a significant concern on roads across the country. Actions such as running red lights, excessive speeding, tailgating and erratic lane changes are significant concerns that not only endanger the driver but also pose a serious threat to others. If we can learn to understand the contributing factors in the rise in aggressive driving and learn how to avoid it, perhaps we can help make our roads safer for everyone.

In BC, aggressive driving is defined as “an individual committing a combination of moving traffic offences so as to endanger other persons or property”. RCMP throughout the province have reported aggressive driving enforcement has seen a significant increase in recent years in both urban and rural areas. According to RoadSafetyBC, aggressive driving was one of the most common factors in police-reported crashes and injuries over a ten-year period.

There are several factors that can contribute to aggressive driving which you may be able to personally relate to.

Traffic Congestion: As the province becomes more populated, the number of vehicles on the road increases. Congestion can cause frustration and impatience among drivers, prompting aggressive behaviors such as weaving through traffic and speeding.

Anonymity: This sense of anonymity by being inside a vehicle, can lead to behaviors that drivers might not exhibit in face-to-face interactions. This anonymity can make drivers feel detached and less accountable for their actions.

Running late: Many people have busy schedules and may resort to speeding to make up for lost time or other aggressive maneuvers such as displaced anger or annoyance.

A lot of us have been exposed to or have even displayed aggressive driving behaviors which include a variety of

behaviors, such as *speeding, tailgating running red lights or stop signs, weaving in and out of traffic, cutting off other drivers, honking, flashing lights, or gesturing rudely, yelling or swearing at other drivers, threatening or assaulting other drivers.

There are proven preventive measures to help us avoid becoming a victim of aggressive driving and to help mitigate our own impact when we feel stressed out while driving. Practice driving techniques that require a combination of self-awareness, patience and proactive strategies. Here are some tips to help you stay calm and safe on the road:

How to Avoid Aggressive Driving

- 1. Plan Ahead:** Allow extra time for your trips to account for potential delays. This can help reduce the stress and urgency that can often lead to aggressive driving.
- 2. Stay Calm and in Control:** Keep your emotions in check while driving. If you find yourself getting frustrated, take deep breaths and remind yourself that arriving safely is more important than arriving quickly.

Remember you can't control others, but you can control your own actions. You won't get there any faster if you drive erratically and may put yourself and others at risk by letting your emotions get the better of you.

- 3. Practice Polite Driving Habits:** Avoid behaviors that can provoke other drivers, such as tailgating, cutting off other vehicles and using high beam headlights unnecessarily. Always signal your intentions and merge politely.
- 4. Avoid Confrontation:** If another driver is aggressive, do not engage with them. Avoid making eye contact, gesturing or responding to their behavior. Instead, focus on your own driving and let them pass.

5. Use Your Horn Sparingly: Reserve your horn for emergency situations. Excessive honking can escalate tensions and provoke aggressive responses from other drivers.

6. Create Space: Maintain a safe distance from other vehicles, especially those displaying aggressive behavior. This gives you more time to react and reduces the likelihood of a collision.

7. Report Aggressive Drivers: If you encounter a dangerous driver, note their license plate number and report them to the authorities instead of confronting them.

8. Stay Focused: Avoid distractions such as using your phone, eating, or adjusting the radio while driving. Staying focused on the road helps you react more effectively to potential hazards.

9. Listen to Soothing Music: Playing calming music can help reduce stress and keep you relaxed while driving.

10. Understand Traffic Patterns: Familiarize yourself with common traffic patterns and peak hours in your area. This can help you plan your trips better and avoid congested routes.

By adopting these strategies, you can significantly reduce the likelihood of engaging in or being affected by aggressive driving. Remember, the goal is to arrive safely, not to compete with other drivers on the road.

Resources:

[RoadSafetyBC](#) has resources aimed at curbing the dangers of aggressive driving.

[DriveSmartBC](#) has information related to aggressive driving. 🚗

** This article contains content derived from AI generated data.*



Manufacturing Advisory Group (MAG) Introduces Educational Workshops to Quarterly Meetings

In June, the MAG team gathered for their second quarterly meeting of the year at Western Forest Products' Duke Point Mill in Nanaimo, BC. The group took a guided tour of the sawmill, where they observed Western's centralized planer facility and its new equipment, including a machine stress rated (MSR) lumber grading machine. This MSR machine ensures precise quality control for lumber grades, providing known strength and stiffness values for engineered products like roof trusses, glulam, and mass timber.

A special thanks to Western for sharing their on-site safety initiatives and offering us a behind-the-scenes look at their lumber facility.

Educational workshops have now been introduced to the MAG Advisor quarterly meetings to enhance learning and development. At the June meeting, the workshop focused on Human Organizational Performance (HOP), an



approach emphasizes 10 actionable ideas to improve performance, and was led by Sam Goodman, the founder of The HOP Nerd LLC. Sam is an expert in improving workplace safety and organizational efficiency through the principles of HOP.

- Start from a place of trust
- Do things with people
- Learn **deliberately** & often from those nearest to the work
- Pain points are starting points

- Become obsessed with the things that matter
- More tools, less rules
- Stop trying to comply (or punish) your way to excellence
- Redefine safe
- Give up on "safety fortune-telling"
- Embrace Humanity

For further information on HOP visit [THE HOP NERD](#) 🗣️

Wood Products Manufacturing Cross Country Share

The second quarterly Manufacturing Cross Country Safety Share was held on June 27th and featured a presentation by **Nicole Brandson**, owner of Cariboo Safety Consulting BC and **Chris Serratore**, CRSP Director, Health and Safety Services at Workplace Safety North.

Nicole's presented on "Building Trust and Connection." with the First Nation Culture. Once there is trust and connection – *we can build on a safer work community and team.*

During Chris's presentation, he shared Heat Stress Prevention Resources with the group that included a helpful resource: [Heat Stress Toolkit](#).

For further details on Nicole and Chris's presentations, listen to the [Wood Products Manufacturing Safety Share Wood Products Manufacturing Safety Share presentation recording](#) on the BCFSC YouTube Channel. 🎧

Different Voices Wood Products Manufacturing Quarterly Webinars

WorkSafeBC OHS Consulting & Education Services, and BC Forest Safety Council host quarterly webinars aimed at empowering safety stakeholders Wood Products Manufacturing to address health and safety hazards in industry. The "Different Voices" webinars are hosted on BCFSC's Microsoft Teams platform and last approximately one hour. Webinar recordings are available on BCFSC's YouTube channel.

On June 25, 2024, the second quarter webinar featured Mobile Equipment/Pedestrian Interface and was presented by Kayleigh Rayner Brown, MAsc, P.Eng.

Kayleigh's presentation included information and findings from a WorkSafeBC Applied Innovation Research Grant project titled "Integrating Inherently Safer Design for Mobile

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Equipment Risk Reduction,” which is a collaboration of Obex Risk Ltd., BCFSC, Dalhousie University, and WorkSafeBC. The authors gratefully acknowledge this funding.

Disclaimer: The views, findings, opinions, and conclusions expressed in the webinar do not represent the views of WorkSafeBC.

For further details on Kayleigh’s [Different Voice Webinar](#) presentation, listen to the presentation recording on the BCFSC YouTube Channel.

Coming Up:

Register for the next “Different Voices” webinar: **First Aid: The Latest Updates for BC’s Occupational First Aid Regulations*** which aims to provide clarity on the upcoming first aid regulation amendments and the available WorkSafeBC resources.

September 26th, 10:00 am - 11:00 am PST.

Join Kim Stubbs, from WorkSafeBC, as she reviews the amendments that will be coming into effect on occupational first aid—including what employers across British Columbia will need to know to update their current first aid program to ensure compliance on November 1, 2024.

[Register for the free webinar today](#) 📍

Wood Products Supervisor Train-the-Trainer Course

On June 5th Gerard Messier, BCFSC Training and Manager of Program Development led this course in at Canfor in Prince George, BC. The course involved utilizing the DISC profile insights to enhance interpersonal communication and relationship building, as well as providing effective worker observations and safety meetings. The training also addressed conflict resolution, difficult conversations, and the development of personal and professional growth plans with a focus on peer/mentor relationships. The course emphasized the significance of ongoing supervisor development

On June 5th, Gerard Messier, BCFSC’s Training and Manager of Program Development, conducted a train-the-trainer course at Canfor in Prince George, BC. The training utilized DISC profile insights to improve interpersonal communication and relationship building. It also covered effective worker observations, safety meetings, conflict resolution, and handling difficult conversations. Class participants also learned techniques for developing personal and professional growth plans, with a strong emphasis on peer/mentor relationships and the importance of ongoing supervisor development. 📍

Bowtie Analysis Workshop on Wood Dust Ventilation Systems

On June 20th, Kayleigh Brown, MASc, P.Eng., led a bowtie analysis workshop in Prince George. The focus was to identify and address process wood dust hazards and controls in ventilation systems. This bowtie analysis served as a crucial industry risk assessment tool, providing valuable insights and strategies for mitigating and controlling process dust in ventilation systems.

The workshop targeted key personnel, including site maintenance supervisors, site safety personnel, and workers responsible for maintaining ventilation system controls. Participants were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively manage wood dust hazards, ensuring safer and more efficient operations.

By the end of the session, attendees had a deeper understanding of the risks associated with wood dust in ventilation systems and were better prepared to implement effective control measures. This initiative underscores the importance of proactive risk management and continuous improvement in workplace safety practices. 📍

BCFSC Celebrates Kayleigh Rayner Brown’s New Role



BCFSC congratulates Kayleigh Rayner Brown on her recent appointment as Lead Engineer in Industrial Process Safety at Jensen Hughes, based in their Halifax office.

In her new role, Kayleigh will have a significant opportunity to further her commitment to process safety and combustible dust practices. She will be enhancing industrial process safety consulting services, supported by a diverse team with extensive experience and resources.

The wood products manufacturing sector is excited to continue its strong partnership with Kayleigh, starting with two upcoming training workshops in October focused on Combustible Dust and Critical Control Management. These workshops are highly anticipated and will be instrumental in advancing safety practices within the industry.

Kayleigh’s expertise and dedication are sure to make a substantial impact in her new position, and BCFSC looks forward to seeing the positive changes she will bring to industrial process safety. 📍

Plant Operator Donald White Wins WPAC's Safety Hero Award

By Gordon Murray, Executive Director, Wood Pellet Association of Canada



Congratulations to Donald White, who is being recognized this month by the Wood Pellet Association of Canada as a Safety Hero for his significant contributions to making the workplace safer and better for others. *Donald White, plant operator at Shaw Renewables in Hardwood Lands, Nova Scotia, is WPAC's latest Safety Hero. Photo: Shaw Renewables.*

Donald is a plant operator at Shaw Renewables in Hardwood Lands, Nova Scotia, whose upstanding work ethic and commitment to the safety of his co-workers have consistently led to improvements in the plant's safety management system.

As industry leaders, converting local biomass waste into high-quality biofuel products, the company's safety culture is the top priority. Donald has been instrumental in training new assistant operators to safely perform their job functions.

Manager Dan Washburn nominated Donald for the award. "Donald always takes the initiative to point out safety concerns when they arise, either to management or through our EHS system." Dan says. "He is always available for collaboration in making our plant a safer place to work, and Donald's ideas have spurred safety improvements throughout our plant."

Shaw Renewables' commitment to safety led the company to set up an area featuring WPAC's Safety Hero Initiative poster and a nomination box to encourage employees to recommend their fellow employees for this important award. Not surprisingly, Donald received the most nominations from his peers.

The Safety Hero award recognizes individuals who are making a difference by helping to make their facilities safer and keeping their co-workers and employees safe.

Let's keep recognizing the efforts of our colleagues who ensure we all go home safely every day. By acknowledging this work, we are reconfirming our commitment to safety and raising awareness of the actions we can all take—big or small—every day to make our sector safer.

Do you know a safety hero? Nominate someone today online [here](#). 🇨🇦

Integrating Process Safety Management into Canadian Wood Pellet Facilities that Generate Combustible Wood Dust

The Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering recently published an article on the outcome of a research project integrating Process Safety Management (PSM) into Canadian wood pellet facilities that generate combustible wood dust.

This research project aimed to enhance the integration of process safety in operations, focusing on

the CSA Z767 standard. The study included a PSM survey for gap analysis, self-assessment worksheets supported by industry best practices, and a series of informative factsheets. Additionally, an implementation strategy comprising 10 primary activities was developed, serving as a roadmap for a phased approach. This comprehensive research provides

a solid foundation for improving process safety in the wood products manufacturing industry, ensuring safer operations and better compliance with safety standards.

For more detailed outcomes of the research project, refer to the [full article](#) in the Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering. 🇨🇦



So many options!

As the seasons shift, it's the perfect time for workers and companies to review their safety training, emphasizing the importance of due diligence in every aspect of their operations. This is particularly crucial as work activity increases across BC. Regardless of whether your team is well-established or has just welcomed new workers, the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) offers helpful resources to support requirements and best practices, as well as to encourage ongoing learning. Here's what we offer:

- Online Learning Centre: Access a variety of free online forest safety courses that are accessible where and when you are ready for training.
 - In-Person Training Courses: Participants benefit from our knowledgeable instructors, valuable interactions with industry peers through group activities, as well as printed materials.
 - Worker Competency Assessments: Tools to ensure work is performed safely by trained professionals with the right expertise.
 - Webinars & Workshops: Explore on-demand webinars and online workshops to enhance your knowledge.
- [Describe Safe Decision Making in a Forestry Workplace](#)
 - [Due Diligence – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)
 - [Effective Communication – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)
 - [Forestry Safety Overview](#)
 - [Grapple Yarder Operator](#)
 - [Hazard Identification, Inspection and Investigation – Forest Supervisor](#)
 - [Hazard Identification, Inspection, Investigation – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)
 - [Hook Tender](#)
 - [Identifying Hazards and Assessing Risk – Wood Product Manufacturing](#)
 - [Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites](#)
 - [Landing/Utility Person](#)
 - [Leadership and Professionalism – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)
 - [Mechanized Harvesting](#)
 - [Off-Road Vehicle Knowledge Unit](#)
 - [Orientation, Training and Skills Development – Forest Supervisor](#)
 - [Orientation, Training and Skills Development – Wood Products Manufacturing](#)
 - [Phase Congestion](#)
 - [Professional Industry Driver](#)
 - [Resource Road Driver Knowledge Unit](#)
 - [Rigging Slinger](#)
 - [Road Building](#)
 - [Serious Incident Investigation](#)
 - [Stand Tender](#)
 - [Tower Operator](#)
 - [Winch Assist Harvesting](#)

Online Learning Centre

Our online Learning Centre library of courses continues to grow, with nearly 40 selections – all at no cost to workers and companies in BC's forestry and manufacturing sectors:

- [Basic Forest Worker](#)
- [Basics of Due Diligence – Forest Supervisor](#)
- [Basics of Effective Communication – Forest Supervisor](#)
- [Basics of Leadership and Professionalism – Forest Supervisor](#)
- [Blasting Hazards and Safety](#)
- [Chokerperson](#)
- [Combustible Dust Training for Contractors](#)
- [Combustible Dust Training for Managers and Employers](#)
- [Combustible Dust Training for Workers](#)
- [Cornerstones of Effective Safety Supervision – Forest Supervisor](#)
- [Cornerstones of Effective Safety Supervision – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)

Courses are regularly being developed, so check our [Course Catalogue](#) to view a comprehensive list.

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In-Person Training Courses

For those seeking in-person training, BCFSC provides a variety of options for Fall and Winter 2024. To secure your spot, we recommend registering early:

Start Date	Location	In-Person Training Courses
Oct 9	Kamloops	Basic Incident Investigation
Oct 10	Kamloops	Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors
Oct 16	Cranbrook	Basic Incident Investigation
Oct 17	Cranbrook	Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors
Oct 17	Prince George	Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors
Oct 22	Nelson	Falling Supervisor
Oct 31	Campbell River	Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors
Nov 7	Kamloops	Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors
Nov 12	Campbell River	Falling Supervisor
Nov 14	Prince George	Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors
Nov 27	Campbell River	Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors
Nov 29	Campbell River	Basic Incident Investigation
Dec 6	Prince George	Basic Incident Investigation

Visit our [Course Schedule](#) to see current information on all available courses and to enroll.

If scheduled sessions and locations aren't convenient for your operations, consider our requested training option, where our instructors come to your location at cost-recovery pricing. Email training@bcforestsafe.org to learn more.

Worker Competency Assessments

In addition to training courses, we offer industry-developed assessments that supervisors can use on the job to ensure their workers are qualified for their operations:

All Occupations

- [Basic-Forest-Worker-Assessment](#)

Yarding

- [Grapple-Yarder-Assessment](#)
- [Hooktender-Assessment](#)
- [Landing-Utilityperson-Assessment](#)
- [Chokerperson-Rigging-Slinger](#)
- [Tower-Operator-Assessment](#)

Mechanized Harvesting

- [Feller-Buncher-Assessment](#)
- [Skidder-Assessment](#)
- [Dangle-Head-Processor-Assessment](#)
- [Hydraulic-Log-Loader-Assessment](#)
- [Forwarder-Assessment](#)
- [Hoe-Chucker-Assessment](#)

Road Building

- [Dozer-Operator-Assessment](#)
- [Excavator-Operator-Assessment](#)
- [Articulated-Rock-Truck-Operator-Assessment](#)
- [Grader-Operator-Assessment](#)
- [Wheel-Loader-Operator-Assessment](#)
- [Rock-Drill-Operator-Assessment](#)

Webinars and Workshops

Click on the link to access our [Webinars & Workshops](#) covering a range of forest safety related topics.

We hope that this article inspires you to enhance your worker training and assessment program. We're here to answer any questions you may have about our courses and training resources. Contact us at: training@bcforestsafe.org. 📧

Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites


BCFSC launched the Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites course in May 2023 and to date 1,346 participants have completed the training to the end of July 2024.

This free one-hour online orientation course is intended for workers who work around dangerous trees in forestry operations - harvesting, silviculture and firefighting. **This is a basic awareness training course and does not train you to assess dangerous trees. The Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Certificate Program is a different training program that is offered by UNBC.**

A danger tree is any tree that presents a hazard to workers due to lean, physical damage, overhead condition, deterioration or any combination of these factors. A tree does not have to be dead to be a danger tree and a dead tree is not necessarily dangerous. The key to working safely around danger trees is to conduct a thorough risk assessment on any areas where workers are to be working.

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- Understand what a dangerous tree is and the significance for all forestry workers
- Explain what happens on worksites to identify and control dangerous trees
- Describe basic dangerous tree characteristics and what to look for
- Understand how to keep yourself and others safe when working around dangerous trees

Click here for more information, including how to enroll: [Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites](#) 

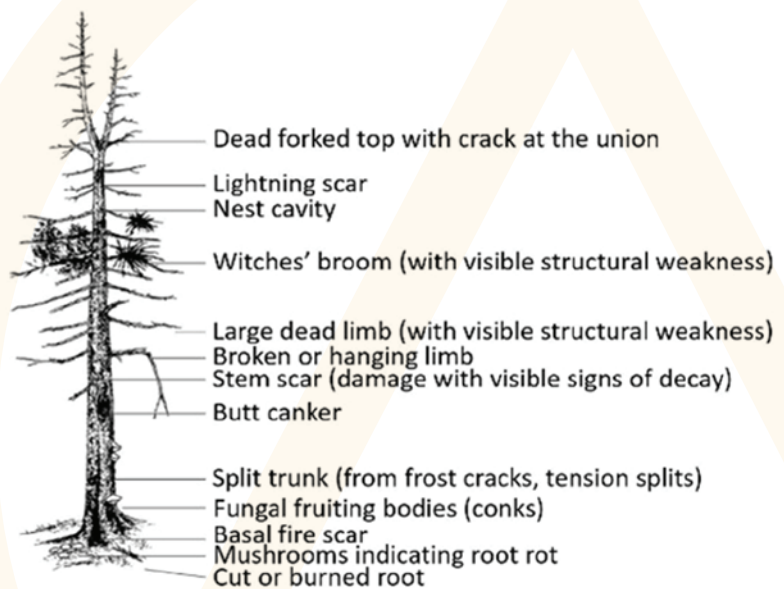


Image courtesy of BC Wildlife Dangerous Tree Committee



My Unexpected Heart Attack: A Wake-Up Call

By Matt Edmondson, M. Edmondson Contracting Ltd.

It was just another morning at work, around 8 o'clock on December 28th. I was busy bunching out a power line when I started feeling a bit anxious. As time went on, the anxiety grew, and I began to feel strange. I kept working, but the discomfort wouldn't go away. Soon, I had severe back pain and a stiff neck. Realizing something was wrong, I stopped and called over to the BC Hydro observer.

I asked him to drive me back to my pickup truck. Luckily, I always carry aspirin with me, so I took three tablets, hoping it would help. But the pain got worse, and I found myself on all fours in front of the pickup. I told the supervisor that came by my pickup that something was seriously wrong and that we needed to get to the hospital.

We were about 20 minutes away from Kamloops, with cell service ten minutes out from the worksite. We decided to keep going, hitting every red light along the way. When we finally arrived at the hospital, I walked up to a staff member and said, "Something's not right, I think I'm having a heart attack." They quickly took my information and hooked me up to an ECG machine, confirming my suspicion.

Within minutes, I was surrounded by medical staff who began administering IVs and monitors. They gave me medication to dissolve the blockage in my heart, and within 15 minutes, the blockage was gone. However, my heart went out of rhythm about six hours later, but the medical team managed to stabilize it.

I spent four days in the hospital because the lab I was supposed to go to in Kelowna was closed for the New Year. The doctors thought I was in good enough shape to wait until it opened, but if they thought I was in trouble it would have opened right away. The following Tuesday I was transferred to Vernon and from there onto Kelowna. Once I got to Kelowna, I had my procedure where the cardiologist inserted a stent to clear the blockage. Despite the severity of my STEMI heart attack, I was fortunate to have only one blockage, and the rest of my heart was in good condition.

The experience was a wake-up call. I had never been on medication before, and now I was taking several. I'm on five different

medications: a cholesterol pill, a beta blocker, aspirin, a low-dose blood thinner, and an anti-rejection drug. The mental toll of having take medication suddenly was significant and definitely took some getting used to, but the support from the medical staff was incredible. They guided me through every step, from Kamloops to Kelowna, ensuring I understood exactly why I needed the medication and what it would do.

I used to laugh at my wife for her regular visits to the doctor and her prescriptions. Even a single Tylenol would make me drowsy, whereas my wife could take several and still function normally.

One of the most helpful things for me though was the vascular program I attended. I completed an eight-week exercise program, followed by another four-week gym program. The support from the vascular program nurses and the camaraderie with fellow patients were invaluable. Sharing experiences and learning from others in similar situations made a world of difference. Now, I make it a point to exercise regularly, whether it's riding an elliptical, a bike, or my e-bike. The goal is to get my heart rate up 30 points above resting, and it has become a part of my daily routine.

Ignoring the signs of a heart attack can be fatal. I've heard too many stories of people dismissing chest pain and not waking up the next day. Living in a small town like Savona, news of my heart attack spread quickly. Many people told me they now carry aspirin because of my experience. At 58, I never thought I'd be a candidate for a heart attack, but this ordeal has taught me the importance of listening to my body and seeking help when something feels wrong. My message is clear: don't ignore the warning signs. Seek medical help immediately.

The healthcare system, despite its flaws, can be incredibly effective when it matters most.

In my case, the care I received was exceptional. The emergency staff, the cardiologists, and everyone involved were top-notch, and I am grateful for their expertise and dedication. While the



Image Credit: CFJC News

healthcare system often faces criticism, my experience was a testament to its efficiency and effectiveness, especially in critical situations. I recently spoke with friend of mine who is a former head of the BC Nurses' Union. When I told her what happened, she confirmed that the system worked exceptionally well in my case. It's reassuring to know that even someone with her expertise knows how good the system can be when you need it most.

And to anyone recovering from a heart attack, my advice is to stay active and engaged. Don't let the experience bring you down; instead, use it as motivation to improve your health and well-being. Two months after my heart attack I was back skiing again with my 6-year-old granddaughter. It was definitely a life changer, and it took me a while to face it head on, but I took everything I learned from everyone who helped me and made it part of my life. Now I exercise at least a half hour every day which is nothing. It's a half an hour which won't kill you but might if you don't do it! 🏔️



Matt and his granddaughter Heidi back on the slopes!



That Pain in your Back

By Dr. Delia Roberts

Have you had problems with your back? Painful back injuries are one of the most common causes of WorkSafeBC claims in the forestry sector, ranking third highest for both numbers of incidents and days lost. No job or demographic seems to be immune, back injuries can occur with the hard physical labour of tree planting or falling, or with the largely sedentary jobs of equipment operation, driving or desk work. They happen to both young and older workers, experienced or novice. And once injured, back pain often becomes a reoccurring problem with repeated flare ups. Almost 70% of people with back pain will experience a second episode within a year. Back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide, it can affect your ability to function at work and at home. But there are ways to protect yourself from hurting your back, and improving your recovery if you already have back pain. Like with most things, early intervention can help avoid developing a chronic problem, and some effort towards prevention can save you a great deal of grief in the long term.

Reasons for Backpain

The back is a complex system of layers of muscles, tendons and ligaments built over a stacked series of bones that are cushioned with fibrous discs and cartilage. The bones of the spine and pelvis themselves have a limited amount

of mobility, but fortunately, a healthy back is capable of bending and rotating. The various layers of muscles work in different directions to both support the back and cause movement. Strains and overuse injuries can occur when the forces exerted exceed the capacity of these tissues, either because the forces are too large as in lifting a very heavy object or being struck by one - or if the tissues are too weak, as may happen when one's lifestyle doesn't keep the back muscles strong. Sometimes, the way we sit or stand also contributes to the problem because the altered posture becomes so habitual that it affects the way that we move. Doing so changes the alignment of the force away from the direction that muscles and joints are designed to work in, making them more susceptible to being overloaded. Repeated exposure to small forces can also cause damage if the muscles are fatigued and/or the direction of the force is not aligned with the direction of the tissues. In some cases, this can transfer the force onto the discs, cartilage and even bone, causing more damage.

In real life, all this is hard to diagnose. Most cases of back pain are considered to be non-specific, which means that it is not possible to know exactly what is causing the pain. Your primary health care provider or physiotherapist can complete a physical exam and identify the location, pattern, duration and character of the pain.

They will check to see which movements are restricted or cause an increase or decrease pain. This information along with any description that can be provided about the onset of pain, including the type of trauma (if any) can help to inform the diagnosis. In 90% of cases the injury is mechanical in nature involving muscles, tendons and/or ligaments, and can be treated conservatively

without surgery, injections or medications. However, back pain can sometimes result from other serious causes. Symptoms that mean that your injury needs medical attention include pain that doesn't get better in a couple of weeks, pain that cannot be controlled with over-the-counter medications, pain that radiates down your arms or legs, tingling or pins and needles, pain while urinating, fever and unintended loss of weight. In such cases your primary care provider will likely order x-rays and/or an MRI and possibly some blood tests to rule out any disease state that can be causing your pain. But keep in mind that even with imaging, mechanical damage is very hard to pinpoint. The degree of pain and disfunction is not always consistent to what is seen in the images.

One of the ways that back pain is categorized is based upon its duration. Acute back pain refers to episodes that last less than 4 - 6 weeks duration, usually with a sudden onset following some kind of trauma or overload situation. Subacute back pain is pain which has lasted for more than 6 - 12 weeks. If you fall in this category it is important to actively address your pain as subacute cases are more likely to become chronic than acute cases. The term chronic is applied to pain which has lasted more than 12 weeks. Unfortunately, the chances of a full recovery go down with chronic pain.

Treatments

When faced with pain most people reach for medications. However, most health care providers feel that pharmacological intervention for back pain is not a very successful way of controlling pain or increasing function. The most effective drugs are narcotics, but these drugs also have serious complications including being strongly addictive and sedating. They are also highly constipating, which may seem minor compared to addiction, but this side effect can make a person very uncomfortable. Over the counter pain medications like acetaminophen and ibuprofen have a limited ability to block pain and long-term use of high doses can be harmful. There are also specific drugs that act to relax muscle or block nerve pain, but these can also be sedating and have other side effects. Instead, most practitioners will first recommend movement and education as the treatments of choice.

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At the most basic level, heat and cold, and resting in positions where your back is well supported can help to ease muscle cramping and reduce pain. Avoiding long periods of immobility has also been shown to be extremely important. If you sit for work, make sure that your seat and workstation are as ergonomic as possible and that you get up regularly and move for a few minutes. If this means that you have to stop your truck or machine, a 5-minute interruption is still more time and cost effective than an injury that takes you out of work for an extended period.

When a person is in pain the natural reaction is to protect the painful area by not moving. But research shows that gentle movements like walking, some types of yoga or other guided movement programs like Tai Chi or Pilates, and muscle strengthening are effective at reducing back pain and improving function. A physiotherapist is a good person to help you choose what program and modalities would be helpful for you. They are trained to assess your movement patterns and relative muscle weaknesses and strengths, and to use the information to build a program to help you heal and regain your desired level of function. They can help you learn how to avoid compensatory strategies that sometimes contribute to pain and dysfunction in the long term.

Another class of treatments are those where the practitioner manipulates the tissues of the back. There are many different manipulative methods, but they all involve some kind of hands-on treatment. Massage is generally relatively gentle, using pressure and manipulation to help muscles relax. Active release techniques refer to deeper types of massage that attempt to also address the connective tissues that bind muscle. Chiropractic is an approach which focuses on forceful manipulation of the spine, some chiropractors also make use of other forms of tissue manipulation. Osteopathic treatments are more gentle realignments than chiropractic and may also address whole body issues. Dry needling is a technique that uses very thin needles inserted into the skin, muscle and connective tissue at sensitive points that are thought to be overly irritable on the theory that over stimulating these areas leads to relaxation and desensitization.

In contrast, acupuncture is a technique that also uses fine needles inserted into the skin at points that have been identified in Chinese medicine as those that block pain and promote healing. Muscle stimulators are devices that emit a very low level of electricity. They can be applied to the skin using pads or attached to needles inserted into deeper tissues to elicit a very low level of stimulation in either nerves (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation - TENS) or muscles (neuromuscular electrical stimulation – NMES). It is thought that this treatment can help nerves become less sensitive to chronic pain and muscles re-learn to contract appropriately and relax when not in use.

Another more invasive group of treatments are based on injecting material directly into the painful area. If your injury involves nerves where they exit from the spinal column, your physician may suggest trying an injection of a medication that can block pain (lidocaine) or lower inflammation (steroid). In some cases this can help to identify exactly where the problem is and provide up to months of pain relief. Platelet rich plasma (PRP) is a treatment where material thought to promote healing is separated out from a small sample of your own blood and injected into tendon, ligament or joint. Similarly, prolotherapy, where the solution injected is sugar water, is thought to stimulate tissue healing – though this time because it is an irritant that can initiate your body's basic inflammatory response.

As far as the science goes, figuring out how these different treatments work and whether they are effective at reducing back pain and increasing function remains uncertain. It's very difficult to execute studies that are free of bias, test only one thing, and go on for long enough to see if the treatment really works. However, there is enough research being done to consider the various treatments on an individual basis. When choosing a practitioner and mode of treatment keep in mind that each person's body is different, and the underlying causes of low back pain can be hard to identify. In addition, each practitioner has their own strengths and weaknesses in diagnosing the nature of the injury as well as administering the treatments. What is known is that stress and belief systems can have a strong influence on the outcome. Hence, it

isn't surprising that some methods like biofeedback and cognitive behavioural training (CBT) can be helpful in reducing chronic back pain.

Surgery is only considered as an option for treating back pain when all other less invasive treatments have not been successful. It is limited to specific types of back problems including those that involve the bones and or fibrous discs of the spine. In addition to the usual risks associated with any type of surgery, there is also a danger of damage to the spinal nerves. Furthermore, the failure rate is very high, ranging from 10 to 40%. So while there are a few specific types of conditions that surgery can help, you want to make sure that it's right for you.

Take confidence in the fact that most back injuries get better, 90% of strain and overuse cases will improve within 6 weeks with modified activities and some rehabilitation work. To give yourself the best possible chance of a full recovery, get the information that you need to understand your injury and your options for treatment. The likelihood of a good outcome is improved if you aren't afraid, so it's important to have a support system that you trust to provide good quality information. Factors like stress and job dissatisfaction can make the symptoms feel worse and last longer, as can anxiety about the injury. Previous episodes of back pain, depression, smoking, a BMI greater than 25 and the presence of leg symptoms are all associated with chronic and more severe problems. Thus, a multidisciplinary approach can be very helpful with a primary care giver coordinating treatments that include psychological support. Lifestyle factors like regular exercise, healthy weight, smoking cessation and avoiding alcohol can also help with prevention and recovery should an injury occur.

Back Care Resources:

[Back Pain - General Information](#)

[Acupuncture](#)

[Recommended Back Exercises](#)

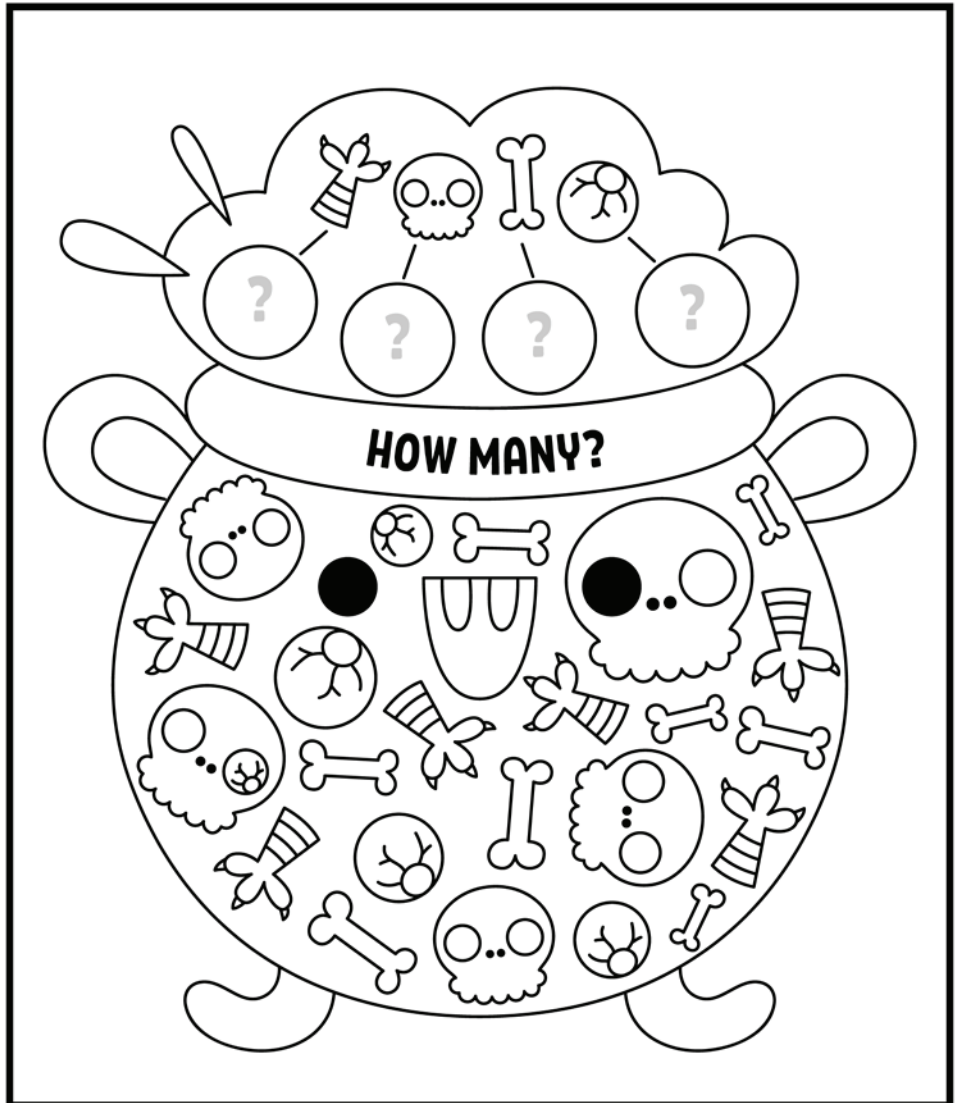
[Tree Planters - Fit to Work](#) includes basic back care tips for anyone. 🌳



Thanks to everyone who entered our June Colouring Contest. Congratulations to **Ellie, age 6**, who was picked from our random draw. Ellie wins the DRIVEN Toy Logging Truck and we will be sending a special gift to everyone else just for entering!



For our fall issue, try and figure out how many ingredients are in the witch's cauldron and then colour it or send us a picture of your own fall artwork and enter to win a DRIVEN Toy Logging Truck. Ask an adult to email us a photo of your artwork with your first name and age and we'll put your name into the draw.



How to Enter:

- Colour the picture or send us your own drawing.
- Have an adult take a picture of your artwork and email it with your name, age and your mom/dad's email address to editor@bcforestsafe.org
- Submit your entry by 4pm, Friday, November 1, 2024.
- Kids aged 3 – 12 are eligible.
- All entries will be put into a random draw to win the toy logging truck. The winner will be contacted via their parent's email address and the winning entry will be featured in the December 2024 issue of the Forest Safety News. 🍁

ABOUT Forest Safety News

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Forest Safety News Editor
Unit 8C - 2220 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, BC V9S 1H9

Call 1-877-741-1060 or email editor@bcforestsafe.org



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