



Vancouver Island Safety Conference



“Leading Change Today for a Safe Tomorrow: On the Floor, In the Bush”

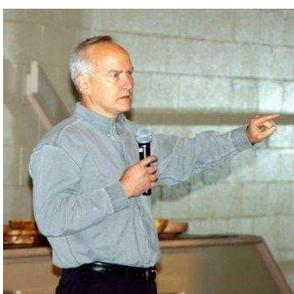
CONFERENCE REPORT

The goal of the 2009 Vancouver Island Safety Conference was to reinforce how individuals (whether supervisors, workers, owner-operators, or plant managers) can provide critical safety leadership during these challenging times. The conference had something for forestry workers in every sector and every type of occupation.

Organized by representatives of labour, industry, the BC Forest Safety Council and WorkSafeBC; conference participants networked with others in the industry and shared best practices from their operations and brainstormed ideas for future success.

SETTING THE STAGE

Conference attendees were welcomed by the 2009 safety conference emcee, Jim McCaskill, WorkSafeBC’s Regional Manager for Vancouver Island who introduced the opening speaker, Reynold Hert, CEO of the BC Forest Safety Council.



Reynold emphasized that the forest sector needs to develop safety leadership at a world-class level. To accomplish this, basics must be done well, and policies consistently followed. This starts at the highest level and flows through to all employees being fully engaged. Leaders must maintain awareness by working with the people in operations and always asking how things can be improved.

“From the heart and from the head, leaders must remain consistent all the time.”

Darshan Sihota, President of Island Timberlands, followed Reynold and added that achieving excellence in one area means that you can have excellence in all – quality, cost, productivity and safety. Safety is very important to Island Timberlands and is demonstrated all levels - 82% of employees are accident free. The company uses a rigorous audit to maintain safety levels for supervisors, employees, and contractors; as well as senior management who are out there and directly involved.





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Minister of Labour, Murray Coell



Conference participants appreciated the input of BC Minister of Labour, Murray Coell as he shared a personal story of losing a family member in a forestry accident. He attended the memorial service some years back at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre where the 2009 safety conference was now being held. This gave a personal dimension to his comments regarding the government's commitment to improving forest worker safety in BC.

Safety Leadership Awards

Minister Coell then participated with Reynold Hert in awarding the BC Forest Safety Council's 2009 Safety Leadership awards to Roger Whittaker (Safety "MVP" Award) and Jack Miller (Carey White Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement). Also recognised were 2009 runners-up Randy Boas and Stu Smith. (L to R) Reynold Hert, Randy Boas, Stu Smith, Jack Miller, Roger Whittaker, Minister Murray Coell)



Following the afternoon breakout sessions, Stephen Frasher, CEO of Western Forest Products, helped close the conference by reminding attendees that employers have an obligation to their workers to go home safely each night. He also spoke to the "point of resistance" where leadership needs to continue working to drive safety improvements to reduce injuries. He also stated that we need to settle the "safety vs. productivity" debate that implies safety is just a cost. Investment in safety yields results that can be measured and should drive further positive change. He challenged the audience to value safety, not just talk about it.



"Safety is not a zero sum game."



Darrell Wong, President of USW Local 1- 2171, spoke to the challenges that industry currently faces. He recommended an increase in the training that is in the field. He also commented that industry must work towards creating safe rewarding jobs to recommend to young people entering the workforce. The Steelworkers continue to work to provide resources to improve worker safety, including a new safety information website www.fwsn.org.

Peter Newman, regional prevention manager for WorkSafeBC, closed the conference with thanks to everyone who attended and a challenge to participants to be leaders on their jobsites, and to work together to create a safe tomorrow, both on the floor and in the bush.





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SAFETY PROGRESS & CHALLENGES



Panel facilitator Bert Painter (*at left*) led a discussion with (*L to R in photo below*) Jon Slater – supervisor, Island Timberlands Northwest Bay, Don Banasky – contractor, FallTech Logging Ltd. & Director of Truck Loggers Association, Peter Lineen – Chief Operating Officer, BC Forest Safety Council, Joe Holmes – Plant Manager, Western Forest Products Inc., and John Little – worker rep, Western Forest Products Inc. Duke Point and the Federation of Labour Council. The panel comments set the tone for the small working group sessions that followed later.

Jon Slater – Regulatory enforcement sets the standard, but personal accountability is a key component of safety leadership at every level. Island Timberlands has noticed a huge improvement on supervisor documentation noting deficiencies and corrective actions in a “safety work order book.” All First Aid incidents and equipment damage are investigated to “knock the bottom out of the accident pyramid.” The “elephant in the room” is issues around impairment. The industry is fragmented but all are aware of the importance of safety. We need to set an example and take responsibility. We also need to “bring safety to the hill – it’s not just paper in drawers.” We need a recruitment and training plan to replace an aging workforce.



Peter Lineen – Key belief must be that injury-free work is possible. Progress has been made on the coast and tremendous gains have been made around leadership – 1) Individuals have a better understanding of regulatory framework, 2) more personal responsibility, 3) more social obligation around safety. Long term systemic change is required – it takes one full year of positive change for every 7 years of previous behavior (culture shift). Recent reviews of industry incidents and fatalities point to the need for personal belief and attitudinal changes. We need to deal with familiarity and complacency. Supervisors need “soft skills” such as communication. As an industry, we need benchmarking on how to manage and lead effectively.

Joe Holmes – “Nothing we do is worth getting hurt for.” In the mills, significant statistical progress has been made in safety. Bill C-45 has created more incentive regarding leadership. Often when you fix the safety problem, production increases anyway. Emphasis needs to be on new workers, also more emphasis on PPE and hazard recognition. Don’t assume everyone knows how to do things right. Need to focus on the “critical few” (i.e. hand injuries). The temptation is there to take your eye off the ball and try to do more with less. Leaders need to ensure that staff does not take shortcuts as it is not worth it. Soft tissue injuries will need to be addressed with aging workforce. With fewer workers on the job, other people are taking on more responsibilities. Leadership needs to make the safety priority clear.

John Little - In tough times, so much company participation is encouraging. Awareness will fuel safety changes. There used to be different rules when different foremen were around, but not so



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much anymore. Management must follow same rules as workers. The symbolism of WCB changing their name to WorkSafeBC is positive. The focus is now on working safe. Risk assessment knowledge does not happen unless workers are trained. JSAs and JSBs need to be reviewed and updated. Does anyone actually refuse unsafe work? Need to move away from blaming workers for incidents. Industry must reward and acknowledge achievements in safety.

Don Banasky – We must lead by example and walk the talk. FallTech has many site changes in a week so site orientation has to take priority over anything. Hazard reporting is key: WorkSafeBC, Council and everyone must work together regarding safety. Regulators have a guidance role over grey areas. Staying focused is key and a challenge – both financially and in life. Leaders need to act on any lack of focus, i.e. relationship issues, drug or alcohol problems. There will be a shortage of trained / experienced workers in the future that must be addressed.

WHAT YOU SAID...

The 250 people that attended the Vancouver Island Safety Conference discussed and shared best safety practices in small working groups with each other, and provided comments and suggestions for future focus to WorkSafeBC and Forest Safety Council representatives.

From the reams of flip chart pages and facilitator notes, many of the best contributions and suggestions have been pulled together into some areas where there was a consistent and clear message. Many of these ideas will be integrated into future Forest Safety Council training initiatives and work plans. But to get the best results, conference participants should take a lead role back at their workplaces in making the changes today that will lead to a safer tomorrow.

There are a number of ways to potentially use the information that's been collected:

- Company owners and senior managers should review the topics and see where there may be opportunities for improving their own safety leadership in their operations.
- Supervisors can find something to add to their “safety toolbox” in just about every area.
- Workers can check how their operations, or their own work habits, measure up against some of the benchmarks outlined in the suggestions.
- Safety committees could do a gap analysis of their safety program and discuss whether they should incorporate some of the ideas into their safety policies or procedures.
- Safety committees may also identify training or safety equipment needs that could be proposed to company management.
- Use the topics as discussion items over a series of company or crew safety meetings.
- The best outcome would be to find areas where each person can take a leadership role and help improve safety for themselves and for others on the worksite.

For additional safety and information resources, visit the Forest Safety Council's website at www.bcforestsafe.org or WorkSafeBC at www.worksafebc.com



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LEADERSHIP

- Senior managers need to get into the woods where workers can talk to them. Plan for regular site visits by managers to attend crew talks or participate in inspections.
- Engage employees directly in developing and running safety programs and activities. Workers can be trained to conduct hazard/risk assessments and develop controls.
- Pre-qualify, monitor and audit contractors to same standards as company crews.
- Complete “full-circle” communication on safety issues & concerns raised by workers.
- Accept accountability for worker safety – it is unacceptable to hurt people at work.
- Recognize and communicate to all that safety is good for business.
- Be consistent in safety message and consistent in company requirements.



CULTURE CHANGE

- “Macho” attitudes need to change. Drop the “russian roulette” philosophy.
- Focus on personal accountability, both for yourself and for co-workers
- We need to stop rewarding people for making wrong choices regarding safety.
- Workers need to be able to report close calls or safety issues with no discipline.
- We all need to be comfortable to ask for help when we need it.
- Start safety awareness with the schools and focus on new & young workers.
- Focus on the “human factors” that influence worker decision making and safety.

PLAN THE WORK, WORK THE PLAN

- Planning is critical to reduce hazards to all, especially in a multi-phase operation.
- Planning ahead helps reduce “upset conditions.”
- Create safety plans, just like operation plans. Use integrated planning maps that include both safety and operating information.
- Need to address “yo-yo” or “lurch” logging practices that lead to unsafe workers.
- Hard to stay in shape for physically-demanding work when work is irregular. Help workers with exercise programs, job rotation and bringing people back to work slowly.

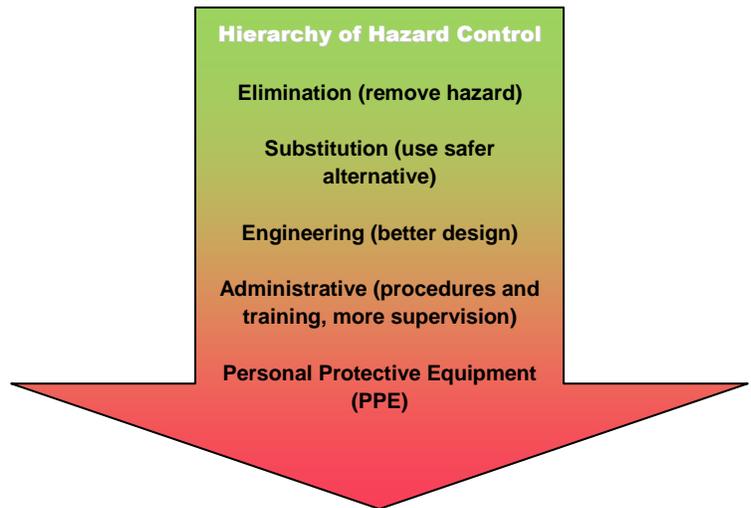


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HAZARD ASSESSMENT & CONTROL

- Raise the forest industry's skill level in recognizing and controlling hazards through focused hazard training and more knowledgeable supervision.
- Every phase needs to communicate known hazards to next phase that follows.
- Need better tools to assess risks of steep slope operations.
- Industry needs better incident investigation tools and training.
- We need to track all incidents (close calls) to know where the risks are.
- If there is a near miss (close call) on site, shut down and discuss with crew.
- Increase awareness of hazards – recognize, step back, intervene and take safe steps.



IMPAIRMENT

- When we talk impairment, we need to address fatigue, especially around shift scheduling or long drives to the work site
- Overly fatigued workers are impaired and should be taken off work.
- Recognize hydration as a critical means to combat fatigue. Have water available.
- Drugs and alcohol are still an issue. How do we address this?
- Implement physical ability testing in an appropriate way e.g. eyesight, hearing, etc.

TECHNOLOGY

- Industry should move to electronic data collection (Palm Pilots, handhelds, etc.).
- Use "FindMeSpot" GPS for man checks with employees working in the bush alone.
- Where possible, increase mechanization to remove people from risk.
- Improve lock out / tag out systems, especially for harvesting.
- Keep a "PortaPower" hydraulic unit on site to rescue workers from cabs or vehicles.
- Redesign doors / hatches on equipment to allow operator escape following upsets.



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QUALIFIED SUPERVISION

- Supervisors must be qualified. What does that look like?
- Supervisors need to train and mentor workers; conduct regular worker observations and competency assessments and use the results to provide additional coaching to workers.
- Whenever possible, supervisors should utilize peers to help their co-workers in worker observations, evaluations and mentoring.
- Understand why and how to intervene with workers who are working unsafely.
- Increase “soft skills” such as communication, problem solving, trust building, etc.
- Have short “tailgate” or “toolbox” meetings every day. Cover one new topic each day.
- Keep a “block binder” with all safety critical information and documentation included.
- Supervisors need to “hand-off” information from shift-to-shift.
- Track safety issues through to completion and document for next phase or work.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- Industry needs to improve worker recruitment and training, focusing on areas where the most serious injuries occur and providing additional training resources to contractors.
- Should be basic pre-qualification training for all forestry workers before entering work force (e.g. First Aid, WHMIS, S100, Hazard Recognition & Control, etc.).
- Use older safe workers to train your workers (“Use the knowledge before it goes”).
- Training in incident investigation is critical.
- On-the-job training should focus on hazards of the job (not just machine functions).
- Educate first, then train. What’s the difference? We need both knowledge (education) and skills (training) in order to work safely.
- Workers need to be evaluated for competency on a regular basis
- Support expanded apprenticeship-type programs for forestry workers.
- Supervisor refresher training should be mandatory.
- Employers should get tax incentives for training. Identify more forestry occupations as trades and eligible for apprenticeships and training funding.
- Work with learning institutions to improve recruitment and training.

BC FOREST SAFETY COUNCIL – SAFE COMPANIES

- Work on improving BC Forest Safety Council systems that have already been established, such as SAFE Companies.
- Develop industry-wide standard safety documentation and SOPs for forestry & mills.
- The BC Forest Safety Council and WorkSafeBC need to make sure their efforts are complementary and not creating different priorities for the industry.



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- Need much quicker turn-around on incident investigations and industry safety alerts.
- Standardize road calling across the province so everyone follows same procedures.
- Improve coordination between Forest Safety Council and WorkSafeBC (WSBC).
 - Better align goals between the organizations
 - WorkSafeBC inspections support SAFE Companies, and safety audits support regulations
 - Companies invite WSBC officers to pre-works and orientations.
 - Sort out who issues and pulls “tickets” for certified workers.
 - Speed up fatality investigations and communication of preventative actions.
 - Coordinated approach to gaining support for training costs.
 - Establish joint guidelines for recordable incidents.
- Share “Winner” alerts, not just hazards or upsets. Promote success and best practises.

IN CONCLUSION

Thanks to the 2009 conference steering committee: Bert Painter, Bill Laturnus, Dave Whiteley; Michael Milholm, Peter Newman, Bjarne Nielsen, Richard Bazille, Rick Whiteford, Ross Munro, Richard Bazille, Jim Sears, Steven Mueller, Terry Baker, & Chris Warburton

Special thanks to the conference sponsors who make it possible to present this conference at no cost to participants: BC Forest Safety Council, Coastland Wood Industries, Island Timberlands, TimberWest, United Steelworkers, Western Forest Products, & WorkSafeBC

Thanks to the safety leaders who provided keynote addresses and participated on the panel: Jim McCaskill, Reynold Hert, Murray Coell, Peter Newman, Jon Slater, Peter Lineen, Joe Holmes, John Little, & Don Banasky

Thanks to the workshop facilitators: Bill Laturnus, Steve Mueller, Stu Smith, Terry Baker, Allison Thompson, Richard Bazille, & Bert Painter

And most of all, the steering committee wants to thank you for your participation and contribution to the 2009 conference. Leadership at the BC Forest Safety Council also appreciates the input and has been working to incorporate your ideas and suggestions into the Council’s 2010 work plan. Look for updates on our progress over the next year.

Make sure to mark October 2nd, 2010 into your calendar now and plan to join us for another great conference. This one is planned to be held at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo which will provide us with expanded options for safety seminars and workshops.

