

Forest Safety news

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Minister commits to improve safety

BY PAT BELL, B.C. MINISTER OF FORESTS AND RANGE

Forest workers are the sector's most valuable resource, and their safety is paramount.

My ministry has accomplished much since the Auditor General's 2008 report on forest worker safety, including developing a Forest Worker Safety Strategy and Action Plan, which build upon our long-standing commitment to worker safety.

As part of the ministry's commitment to safety on forest service roads, the province is investing \$20 million to improve travel conditions on key roads.

We have also purchased radar guns, increased speed restriction enforcement and are implementing Road Safety Committees province-wide to better coordinate and manage forest road use.

A radio communication pilot project is improving road user safety through standardized procedures. These pilots, located on Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and near Tumbler Ridge, include enhanced radio signage and standardized radio protocols, which have been received well by users of these roads.



MINISTER PAT BELL

BC Timber Sales achieved SAFE Company certification in 2008 and has certification requirements for timber sale licensees and parties bidding on contracts. The Ministry's Forests For Tomorrow program also requires SAFE certification for its agreement holders.

The Ministry continues to work as a member of the Inter-Agency Committee on Forest Safety, of which the BC Forest Safety Council is also a member, to address the Auditor General's recommendations.

By working cooperatively, sharing best practices and remaining committed to continuous improvement of safe practices and procedures, I am hopeful we will continue to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in the forest sector.

Vigilance and focus



Forestry workers and employers should be proud of the unprecedented time, energy and resources they have put into improving safety since 2004. We can point to greater safety awareness and less of a perception that injuries are "just part of the job."

Most important, fewer forest workers have been killed and seriously injured.

From 1998 to 2005, WorkSafeBC accepted an average of nearly 22 harvesting fatality claims each year — the worst in 2005 with 34 claims. But the industry averaged fewer than 14 fatalities from 2006 to 2008. While this 35-per-cent reduction is a step in the right direction, no fatality is acceptable. Still, despite improvements like this, we need to increase efforts to make safety integral to each worker's life, every company's operations and the industry's culture.

The economic downturn is a challenge. It makes both basic training and upgrading hard to undertake. Financial uncertainty can affect a worker's job focus — and when that job is inherently dangerous, the consequences can be disastrous.

But we must be vigilant and focus on the future. In 2004, our industry decided that unsafe is unacceptable and committed to change the way it does business. Because of this dedication, more forest workers today are going home without injury. That's what it's all about, and that's what makes it all worthwhile.

REYNOLD HERT, CEO

New Council work plan

The Council's Executive Committee approved the 2010-12 Council Work Plan in late August. Available at www.bcforestsafe.org/newsroom/publications.html, it emphasizes:

- » Continuing to focus on areas of greatest risk in forestry
- » Helping clients integrate safety into their work to avoid injuries and improve business results
- » Refining current Council programs and activities
- » Improving service to our customers



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

Forest Safety News is published by the BC Forest Safety Council to inform members and others about workplace health-and-safety developments affecting the forest industry.

Have a story or comments? Contact us at news@bcforestsafe.org.

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Council welcomes senior managers

Two senior managers are joining the Council staff this fall — Chief Operating Officer Peter Lineen and Chief Financial Officer Pat Denham.

Peter started his new job September 1 and is responsible for overseeing Council programs and outreach and industry liaison activities.



PETER LINEEN, COO

Since 2005, he was director of environment, health and safety at Western Forest Products, and previously managed health and safety for Weyerhaeuser's Canadian softwood lumber business. Peter is a Canadian Registered Safety Professional, a CRSP governor and past chair of this organization's Board.



PAT DENHAM, CFO

Pat's appointment takes effect November 1. Since 1997, she was director of finance and administration for the Petroleum Services Association of Canada working on financial management, budgeting and association administration. She is a Certified General Accountant and holds the Certified Association Executive designation from the Canadian Society of Association Executives.

Alert to safe transport

Boats, planes and automobiles take centre stage in the Council's Safety Alerts of the Month, with a series on the transporting forest workers by water, air and land.

The first alert in August focused on Transport Canada marine requirements taking effect November 7 for the training and certification of boat operators and crew. The September alert on air transport covers both fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

They are at http://www.bcforestsafe.org/other/Safety_services/Safety%20Alert%20Portfolios/2009_Alerts_of_the_Month.pdf. The alert on road transportation will be posted in early October.

Explosive new training

Two new Council training programs for forest workers will be available late this fall, and details will be posted at www.bcforestsafe.org/training.html

Blasting for Fallers: Prepares qualified fallers to use explosives safely and effectively to remove trees too dangerous to fall by conventional methods.

Blasting for Blasters: Prepares certified surface blasters to use explosives safely and effectively to remove trees too dangerous to hand fall.

Key events for forestry

Taking key roles for forestry this fall, the Council is:

- » A partner in the Human Factors of Safety conference of USW-Forest Industry SHARP Program, September 23-24 in Prince George; details at www.conifer.ca/downloads/SHARP%202009%20Safety%20Conference/SHARP%20Brochure%20September%2024%20%2025%2009.pdf
- » Joining other forestry organizations in a Forestry Island exhibit at the Union of B.C. Municipalities conference, September 30-October 1 at the Vancouver Convention Centre; details at www.civicnet.bc.ca/siteengine/activepage.asp
- » With USW, WorkSafeBC and others, organizing a conference called *Leading Change Today for a Safe Tomorrow: on the Floor, in the Bush*, October 3 in Qualicum Beach; details at www.bcforestsafe.org

OTHER COMING EVENTS

September 21-23 — Canadian Institute of Forestry Annual Meeting, Nanaimo; details at www.viu.ca/cif/

October 20-21 — CrossRoads Road Safety Conference, Prince George; details at www.roadhealth.org

National Forest Week 2009

For what's happening during National Forest Week, September 20-26, check the Council website at www.bcforestsafe.org.

One event is a children's art contest sponsored by the Council, the Truck Loggers Association and the Association of BC Forest Professionals.

Entrants up to age 12 use their artistic talents to show how they like to spend time in the forest and what it means to them. Details and entry forms are at www.abcfp.ca.

