

Supervisor Course Responds to Industry Demands

In response to an industry-wide demand for standardized safety training for supervisors, the BC Forest Safety Council is launching the sector's first supervisor training program that will lead to certification of forest supervisors. The first of two in a series of courses is the Basic Forest Supervisor course and is open to anyone who instructs, directs, and manages forestry workers, or anyone who aspires to be in a supervisory role. It is the foundation and pre-requisite program for a two-day specialized Faller Supervisor training course. Completing both earns a supervisor the opportunity to be certified as a faller supervisor after further evaluation by the Council.

"These courses fill a huge gap identified by industry," says Steve Mueller, Director of Worker Development for the BC Forest Safety Council. "Time and time again, research found supervisors had not received adequate health and safety training, and didn't understand their responsibilities. These programs help to address that problem."

Steve says the issue has surfaced in several ways since the Forestry Safety Task Force recommendation in 2004, which called for the implementation of uniform training and certification standards, beginning with supervisors. In a Council survey, nearly 1,200 experienced, certified BC fallers identified supervisor training as a top forest safety need. A WorkSafeBC inspection of 300 forestry work sites last year found one-fourth did not have a designated supervisor at all, and two-thirds of the supervisors who were present were not properly trained to oversee the work they were responsible for. Also in 2006, a coroner's inquest in the death of falling contractor "Turbo" Ted Gramlich led to a recommendation to design and implement a supervisor certification program. Finally, in January 2007, BC Forest Safety Ombudsman Roger Harris detailed the need for proper supervisor training in his first report, Not Out of the Woods.

As a result of this industry-wide call for more standardized training, the Council developed and piloted the courses that will eventually grow into a comprehensive program formally certifying forest sector supervisors. By the end of next year, the Council plans to be running other specialized supervisor training. When taken with the basic course, these specialized training programs would lead to certification of supervisors in mechanized harvesting, log hauling, silviculture, and other specialties.

"Well-trained supervisors make for a safer workplace," says Vincent Russell, WorkSafeBC's Director of Industry and Labour Services. "WorkSafeBC was pleased to be able to assist with the development of this course, which will help people understand the legal obligation supervisors have to ensure worker safety."

Forestry veteran Werner Dolling, one of the 200 workers who recently completed the courses, says supervisors would be ill-equipped in the woods if they didn't participate in the training. "It's a must," says Dolling. "If they're going to effectively manage people and keep workers safe on the job, they have to know all the rules and regulations in their workplace."

The Basic Forest Supervisor course costs \$585 and the Faller Supervisor Endorsement course is \$390. The courses are held at the Council's new Nanaimo office, which officially

opened its doors in May.

To find out more information about the supervisor training programs, visit the Council's website at www.bcforestsafe.org or call 1-877-741-1060.