



## Safety: An Overriding Principle for BC Timber Sales

**BC TIMBER SALES (BCTS) BELIEVES THAT** safe practices are essential for achieving our business goals and fulfilling our mandate. In addition, we are shocked and saddened by the historical numbers of fatalities and serious injuries that have been recorded in the forest sector as a whole. Clearly, 'unsafe is unacceptable' and the forest sector must collectively improve its safety record.

I, for one, have enjoyed a hugely rewarding career in the forest sector, while periodically encountering significant health and safety risks along the way. It is my firm desire to ensure career opportunities in forestry remain available long into the future, while actively reducing the inherent hazards in this sector.

Building on a solid foundation of safe practices and work sites, BCTS has taken a number of key steps over the past 18 months to promote greater safety awareness, inside and outside of the organization, to licence holders and contractors. Central to our safety efforts is a commitment to foster a stronger culture of safety across the entire sector.

BCTS subscribes to the British Columbia Forest Industry Health and Safety Accord and we are strongly committed to the safety of all individuals affected by operations under the BCTS program – including employees, contractors, licensees and the public. Since December 2005, we have had a senior manager dedicated full-time to leading our corporate safety initiatives. BCTS is also an active member of the BC Forest Safety Council where we sit on its board of directors and on all of its key committees.

On March 28, 2007, BCTS registered as a SAFE Company with the BC Forest Safety Council, and we have targeted to be fully certified to this standard within six months. Obtaining certification under the SAFE Company standard is an important indicator of our success in contributing to forest safety and safe work sites. Our safety

commitment extends beyond our internal operations to encompass all aspects of our business. And we have taken further steps to require specific commitments from those working on timber sale licences or contracts.

All companies or individuals wanting to work on timber sales advertised for sale after April 1, 2007, are required to register with the SAFE Company program. Companies wishing to tender applications for or work on contracts advertised or awarded by BCTS after April 1, 2007, must also be registered with the SAFE Company program. We are implementing a comprehensive, corporate safety program in all 12 BCTS business areas and in our Victoria headquarters to address these SAFE Company requirements. This program applies to all BCTS staff and will provide a guide to help staff deal with licensees and contractors.

Our safety program and the comprehensive safety manual we developed to support this program are both available for review on our website ([www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/safety](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/safety)). The manual contains procedures and standards that should be followed across the entire organization and the standards against which our safety program will be audited.

Our safety manual provides consistent guidance to staff across the province, while allowing sufficient flexibility for them to continuously improve practices. Our supervisors and managers are accountable for endorsing healthy and safe work practices on a daily basis. Supervisors ensure staff is properly trained, aware of safety hazards and know that unsafe action or conduct will not be tolerated in the workplace.

BCTS workers are responsible for conducting their activities in accordance with sound health and safety practices and for ensuring our service providers, contractors and licensees have their own functioning programs in place. This standard applies to high-risk operations such as falling trees,

driving trucks and piloting aircraft. Just as it does to lower-risk activities such as repetitive stress injuries that occur in the office and on routine field activities. These low-risk activities are equally important to address because staff is exposed to them on a daily basis.

In developing our new safety program, we worked closely with WorkSafeBC and the BC Forest Safety Council so that we could benefit from their knowledge and expertise. This continued collaboration, across the sector and with respective government agencies, is essential for fostering a stronger culture of safety throughout the sector. The safety culture we sustain into the future will be rooted in how diligently we undertake our roles, in our prudent follow up on inspections and investigations and in how well we record, track and pass information along through safety logs and safety alerts. It is the combination of these and many other details that will result in the safety outcomes we are striving to achieve.

I am pleased to say that we are well on our way to implementing an excellent corporate-wide safety program that meets our operational circumstances, that is recognized and embraced by industry and our staff and that encourages continuous improvement to increase the program's effectiveness. I am proud to play a role in improving the safety performance of our program and our sector as a whole. 🍷

*Raised on Vancouver Island, Dave Peterson, RPF, graduated from the University of Victoria in 1980 with a BSc in physical geography and natural resource management and became a Registered Professional Forester in 1985. He started his career with the BC Forest Service in 1973 and in 1995 he moved to the private sector for a decade where he worked for the Cariboo Lumber Manufacturers' Association, Lignum Forest Products, Riverside Forest Products and Tolko Industries Ltd. Dave joined BC Timber Sales in 2005.*