

Forestry takes charge

SAFE Companies promises big improvements for everyone

by KEITH PLAYFAIR

The forest sector today focuses more than ever on safety. The industry is taking charge through the BC Forest Safety Council, created with support from industry and government to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries.

The key to this is SAFE Companies, a BC Forest Safety Council program allowing all kinds of forestry operations to earn certification by showing that their safety programs meet realistic standards.

The plan is to have every medium and large forestry company in the program this year and all others by the end of 2008. These are industry objectives—fully endorsed by owners and licencees.

Thousands of forestry companies have registered and hundreds have taken the required training and become SAFE-certified. Others have registered but haven't taken the necessary next steps—that's a mistake. This is the time to act if you're working in the forest—whether you've registered but haven't completed certification or haven't signed up yet.

Real-world programs

Registering brings a step-by-step workbook to help build or review your



PHOTO COURTESY BC FOREST SAFETY COUNCIL

SAFETY TRAINING: Bill Bolton (R) monitors supervisor trainee Noel Phillips as he conducts a stump audit.

safety program, as well as access to free advice from BC Forest Safety Council safety advocates and feedback on how to show that your safety activities meet industry standards.

SAFE Companies was created with advice from contractors and workers who know the real world. The program is not about jumping through hoops, it's about worker safety.

“SAFE certification brings eligibility for WorkSafeBC premium rebates”

People ask, “How hard is it? Will it make my company safer?”

First of all, the program requires some effort—documenting what may have been done informally before, or putting new procedures in place.

Secondly, SAFE-certified companies enjoy payoffs: the most important is obvious—a safety program that you know protects employees. Here are some real examples of how SAFE Companies has proven to be good for the safety of employees and the health of a business.

SAFE Companies led one contractor to look more closely at his business fundamentals: “the entire operation . . . every detail.” The results were operational improvements that he knows paid off.

Another contractor found employees paying more attention to work as they became more safety-conscious. One benefit was less equipment damage; it adds up when you can reduce those \$2,000 repair bills for pickup trucks.

Safety meetings didn't turn into gripe sessions, as a third contractor had expected. After dealing with safety, workers and the employer talked shop in ways that improved productivity.

The benefits of playing it safe

More licencees and major companies are making SAFE certification a condition of bidding or working in the forest sector—some now, others in early 2008. Getting certified sooner puts you ahead of the game.

Certification brings eligibility for WorkSafeBC premium rebates—but qualifying for this year's rebate means being certified by the end of 2007.

The BC Forest Safety Council is geared up to help forest operations become certified—with qualified program staff, effective training and solid support systems. Take advantage of all that and let SAFE Companies help you control safety.

For details on SAFE Companies registration, training and certification, visit www.bcforestsafety.org or call the BC Forest Safety Council office toll free at 1-877-741-1060.

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Get home safe

SAFETY IS VITAL to the people who work in British Columbia's forest sector. Everyone wants to get home safe at the end of the day.

The BC Forest Safety Council is working with silviculture employers and workers to improve safety programs and performance. We are:

- » Training workers and companies to recognize and manage the hazards of working in the forest; and
- » Focusing on the safe transportation of people and products to and from worksites

The SAFE Companies program is now underway. Companies can register, have their safety programs audited, get certified and receive rebates on their WCB payments.

Call now for information about how you or your company can participate in training and SAFE Companies activities.

www.bcforestsafety.org
1.888.632.0211



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable