

## **Workplace Safety and National Forestry Week**

National Forest Week is a good time to reflect on the state of safety in the forest industry, the industrial sector that employs more British Columbians than any other. We are having a much better year, with significantly fewer deaths and serious injuries among the men and women who plant, harvest, transport and process the forest products that are so important to our economy. We still have a long way to go. B.C. Forest Safety Council programs that are starting to make a difference are highlighted below. We are all working to ensure all forest workers go home to their families every day.

*- Tanner Elton, CEO, BC Forest Safety Council, Unsafe is Unacceptable*

### ***SAFE Companies – The Stamp of Approval***

This fall we will certify our first SAFE Companies – forest sector companies who have met a rigorous, audited standard for worker health and safety.

SAFE Company certification will be available to big and small forest companies all around the province. The SAFE Certified logo will give employees and customers the assurance that a company puts worker safety first. SAFE Certified companies will also be eligible for a partial rebate of their Workers Compensation assessments, in recognition of the lower injury rate that comes with sustained focus on worker health and safety.

### ***Faller Certification – A Cut Above***

The Council congratulates the more than 3,000 men and women who stepped up for evaluation and certification as hand fallers over the last 18 months. Every certified faller knows the importance of arriving mentally and physically prepared, equipped and ready for work every day. Recognizing the hazards that threaten the safety of a faller and other workers, and knowing how to control those hazards allows the faller to work more efficiently, ensuring everyone returns home safe at the end of the work day.

We are focusing on the future now. We have just surveyed all certified fallers to learn what hazards they see in their work, and what changes they think would bring the most improvement. We are beginning training courses for new fallers, working hard to safely train new workers for one of the toughest and most satisfying occupations in the harvesting sector.

### ***Forestry TruckSafe – The Road Ahead***

Forestry TruckSafe is all about the people who plan, build, use and manage forest roads – whether that’s a gravel forest service road or a paved public roadway leading to a mill.

Over a year of intensive discussion at conferences, company and municipally sponsored meetings, trucker days and worksite safety meetings have had results. More than one thousand people subscribe to TruckSafe Rumbblings, where they share safety news and information. A group of truckers, engineers, government and company representatives has gotten together to make the rules for driving on very steep slopes safer for everyone. Radio frequencies are being coordinated, so that truckers can stay in touch and stay safe as they drive long distances from the bush to the mill.

These are just two of the many ways that TruckSafe is tapping into the knowledge and energy of the men and women who drive to and from every forestry business in this province.

### ***BC Safe Silviculture – Growing for the Future***

The silviculture business is changing, and the Safe Silviculture project is working to make sure a focus on safety is a part of that change.

New young workers enter the silvicultural workforce every year. Our focus is on making them aware of the hazards they encounter on the job every day. Simple things like eating and drinking right to prepare for the exhausting physical work they face planting seedlings, tending plantations and fighting wildfires. Unfamiliar things like driving safely to and from remote camps and worksites on unpaved roads and trails.

BC Safe Silviculture is focused on knowledge and training for workers. Giving them the power to understand the hazards they face in their work and tools to avoid or remove them is the best way to keep them safe for the season, and many more.

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For more information, please contact:

Karen Zukas  
BC Forest Safety Council  
(604) 696-3959  
zukas@bcforestsafe.org