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## New Resource Package Developed for Working Under Vehicles

Since 2015, there have been six worker fatalities and numerous serious injuries to workers working under or around vehicles and equipment. To support employers and supervisors in leading workplace discussions to prevent these incidents, BCFSC has developed a resource package. The package has two options to facilitate discussion, a formal presentation and a toolbox discussion guide.

The first option is a slide presentation intended for use during sit down meetings and is ideally suited for large groups of people. The presentation describes the recent incidents, identifies common contributing factors and supports the facilitation of a discussion on how the workers and employer at the worksite will work together to prevent these types of incidents from occurring. The package includes slides, a slide guide, facilitator notes, and a sign in sheet.

The second option is a toolbox discussion guide. This guide supports someone leading a toolbox safety meeting. The toolbox guide does not require a projector or large space, so is ideally suited for smaller work groups. The guide covers the same material as the slide package, but is presented in a way that allows the material to be covered at a toolbox meeting. The guide also includes a place for workers to sign that they have participated in the discussion and commit to preventing these incidents.

Neither of these resources requires the facilitator to be an expert on vehicle maintenance.

"This resource package was developed to highlight the risk of working around vehicles and promote discussion and awareness to support the prevention of these types of incidents and ultimately contribute to a safer working environment."

Welcome to the August edition of Forest Safety News, covering news about safety topics in forestry. This is YOUR safety newsletter. We look forward to your input and feedback! Email the editor at [editor@bcforestsafesafe.org](mailto:editor@bcforestsafesafe.org) or call 1-877-741-1060.

said Richard King, Manager of Program Development. "This information is applicable to both work and home and provides the opportunity for crews to engage in productive discussions to ensure these incidents are prevented".

For more information, or to access the resource package directly, please visit the BC Forest Safety Council website at: <https://www.bcforestsafesafe.org/node/3373>.

Comments or suggestions for improvement to this resource package can be sent to [training@bcforestsafesafe.org](mailto:training@bcforestsafesafe.org).

## Managing Stress in the Workplace

The recent downturn in the forest industry has had significant effects across the province, with both temporary and permanent mill closures; work uncertainty from companies and workers alike; and feelings of frustration from all corners. During this period of uncertainty in the industry, workplace stress and the associated potential for incidents is a major cause of concern. It is important to take extra care to ensure the safety of our coworkers and ourselves.

Stress can be helpful, giving us the energy and drive to perform at high levels and complete difficult tasks; however when stress becomes prolonged or extreme, it can have harmful or dangerous effects. Many of us can feel overwhelmed at work

and not know where to turn. This is a sign that stress is becoming unmanageable.

### What is stress?

The Canadian Mental Health Association defines stress as our body's reaction to a real or perceived threat. It is "a reaction to a situation – it isn't about the actual situation. We usually feel stressed when we think that the demands of the situation are greater than our resources to deal with that situation." (<https://cmha.ca/documents/stress>) Stress is our body's fight or flight response to an external situation. However, in today's society—and especially in a work environment—fighting or running away is not an option, so our reactions to stress manifest physically and mentally in

unwanted ways. Occupational stress, or workplace stress, is a common concern for many on the jobsite and is especially problematic during periods of upheaval and uncertainty.

This issues associated with stress are not limited to a certain sector or level in an organization. Stress problems can affect people in both small and large organizations; and at all levels, from workers to owners or executive managers.

### Signs of Stress

Excessive stress can cause physical symptoms such as headaches, an upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest pain and problems sleeping. People are also more likely to get sick when dealing with elevated levels of stress. Chronic,

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untreated stress has been reported to lead to serious medical issues, such as depression, heart disease, forms of anxiety, and obesity.

People dealing with physical symptoms of stress may show up to work fatigued, distracted, or have trouble focussing. Stress can also directly affect mood and people may have trouble making decisions or lack confidence. These effects can all contribute to incidents in the workplace.

Stress is also harmful when people engage in the compulsive use of substances or other negative behaviors to try to relieve their stress. These behaviours can cause people to lose sleep, become distracted, neglect responsibilities, or become withdrawn. Proper self-care is a better strategy for dealing with stress than these behaviours.

## Managing Stress

Managing stress effectively reduces the negative symptoms and allows us to pay attention to the critical safety aspects of our jobs. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) says that there “are many ways to be proactive when dealing with stress. Mental fitness, self-help, taking healthy steps, stress management training, and counselling services can be helpful to individuals, but do not forget to look for the root cause(s) of the stress and take steps to address them. However, in some cases, the origin of the stress is something that cannot be changed immediately. Therefore, finding ways to help maintain personal good mental health is...essential.” (<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>)

This advice is important for all of us—workers, supervisors, and owners—because the current industry environment, the root cause of a significant amount of stress, is not within the control of the vast majority of us. It is important to focus on the things that we can control, such as engaging in self-care, managing our immediate work environments, and supporting one another. For business owners it is important to foster positive health and supportive relationships in your business, and to ensure that people get help if they need it.

### Tips to help reduce stress:

- Build good relationships with co-workers. Talk about stress and how it can be harmful. Watch out for each other and offer to help if someone is having problems with stress.

- Encourage coworkers to ask for help if they need it and provide them with positive support resources like Employee and Family Assistance Programs.
- Get exercise. Physical activity reduces stress and improves your mood.
- Make time for self-care and to set aside time for the things that bring you happiness.
- Get sufficient, good-quality sleep. You can build healthy sleep habits by limiting your caffeine intake late in the day and minimizing stimulating activities, such as computer, cellphone and television use, at night.

### Tips to support workers:

- Treat all employees in a fair and respectful manner.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms that a person may be having trouble coping with stress.
- Involve employees in decision-making and allow for their input directly or through committees, etc.
- Encourage managers and supervisors to have an understanding attitude.
- Incorporate stress prevention or positive mental health promotion in policies or your corporate mission statement.
- Value and recognize individuals' results and skills.
- Provide access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) for those who wish to attend.
- Do not tolerate bullying or harassment in any form.

(Adapted from <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>)

## Conclusion

Despite the challenging state of the forest industry right now, it is important to continue to ensure that work is done safely, whether as an employer or a worker. The news of mill closures is understandably a huge stressor. It is important for everyone to take the steps necessary to ensure that stress is not keeping them from concentrating on their jobs, or causing physical or mental issues that may lead to incidents in the workplace. Take proper steps to manage stress, and, if you need help, reach out. Negative stress, and potential negative coping mechanisms associated with it are dangerous and we need to watch each other's' backs. 🙏

## Understanding how WorkSafeBC Classifications and Assessments are determined

WorkSafeBC's Howard Chang, Director of Assessments; Gerry Paquette, Manager of Classification; and Tom Pawlowski, Manager of Industry and Labour Services (with a focus on forestry) shared how they determine which Classification Units (CUs) companies are put into, as well as what opportunities there are each year for companies to request reconsideration if on the remote chance there has been an error in classification.

### The process of initial classification: how do you make your money?

At the time a company registers with WorkSafeBC, a number of questions are asked. These include: how do you make your money? What are your clients paying you to do? And by “you” it could be you, your crew or sub-contractors.

Of the 240,000 employers registered with WorkSafeBC only about 15,000 have more than one classification assigned. The overwhelming majority of employers have one.

At the time of registration, an employer will receive a welcome package and a description of their company's classification unit assignment. If it doesn't look right, employers need to give WorkSafeBC a call.

If the work doesn't have a 100% fit, then it is the best fit, recognizing that companies might engage in two or three activities that have different CUs. The question then is where do they generate the majority of their revenue? And the answer directs the company's placement into that specific CU.

“We recognize that things evolve with employers and the type of work they do – where they get their money from can change. So every year we send a copy of each employer's industry description. If it doesn't look like them any more then they need to give us a call to ensure we have them in the right classification unit,” said Gerry.

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## Employers are classified on their industrial undertaking not their occupations

So for example, a construction contractor, architect, and construction project manager are all paid to put up houses so they all belong in the industry they are being paid to deliver on. “We classify employers based on their industrial undertaking not their occupations,” said Gerry.

And the industrial undertaking becomes critical risk. For example, if someone in forestry is constructing and/or maintaining logging roads this means that they generally have a higher risk of exposure than other road maintenance operations in urban settings.

## When in doubt, make the call

It remains the employer’s obligation to give WorkSafeBC a call if they believe the classification unit assignment is wrong.

According to WorkSafeBC, this is a very rare occurrence but it can happen. And when it does, based on additional input, employers can be reclassified.

## Sometimes WorkSafeBC gets tips from third parties that a classification may not be accurate

WorkSafeBC has received information from a competitor firm, an auditor or a prevention officer that a company appears to have the wrong classification unit. WorkSafeBC will review but it will never make a change without having dialogue directly with the employer, either verbal or written.

Any time that a company’s classification is changed, a follow-up letter goes to the employer explaining the review process and what recourse that employer has if they don’t agree. Employers may contact the letter writer, the assessment department and/or appeal for review.

## Robust review process

WorkSafeBC has a long-standing committee chaired by their CFO that examines the classifications to ensure that they continue to represent the economy in BC. Changes are made either to the definitions of classification units or with the addition of new classification units as industries evolve.

In total there are between 500 and 550 industry classifications.

One of the key reasons classifications are kept relatively small is to ensure that data generated out of each classification unit is meaningful as a tool to use in improving health and safety in the province.

Industry classifications are just one of those tools to ensure that there are buckets of similar employers with similar risk profiles that generate meaningful data buckets. It is also about parity. “We also want to ensure that employers who are competing with each other in the same market place, with similar safety records/claims are paying the same insurance rates,” said Howard.

“Most importantly when employers are grouped in the right classifications we can better inform responses to health and safety exposures, and share meaningful data and information to ensure controls and mitigation are in place,” said Tom. 🗨️

# Vancouver Island Safety Conference 2019 – save the date!

The Vancouver Island Safety Conference is scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 5th at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo. The theme for this year’s conference is “Succeeding in Today’s Evolving Work Environment”. Keynote conference presenters will provide the latest information on topics ranging from change management to mental health. The conference will continue to have shorter, high impact sessions. Presenters will have booths at the trade show to allow time for one-on-one interactions or follow-up questions. To register for this free conference, please go to: <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/fscapps/reg.php?e=26> 🗨️

## BC Forest Safety Council 2018 Annual Report Summary

Read the BCFSC annual report highlighting current BCFSC activities, opportunities for new projects and programs to better support industry safety. <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/BCFSCAnnualReport-2018.pdf> 🗨️

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## BC Forest Safety Council 2018 Ombudsman Report Summary

The BC Forest Safety Ombudsman is part of the BC Forest Safety Council, and is mandated to investigate safety concerns and provide recommendations for improvement. Below is the link to the 12th BC Forest Safety Ombudsman report. Each year, this report is generated to provide general observations on how the forest sector is doing in achieving the goals industry has set. <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/bcfsc-ombudsreport-2018.pdf> 🗨️



## BC Wildfire Service (BCWS) Fire Danger

British Columbia's forests and wildland cover over 94 million hectares (nearly a million square km and are the most diverse in Canada. Confronted by an average of 2,000 wildfires each year, highly trained fire crews are successful in containing 94 percent of all wildfires in B.C.

### Fire Danger

Weather has a significant impact on wildfires – in how they start, how aggressively they spread, and how long they burn. Find out the current fire danger rating in your area and other information about fire weather.

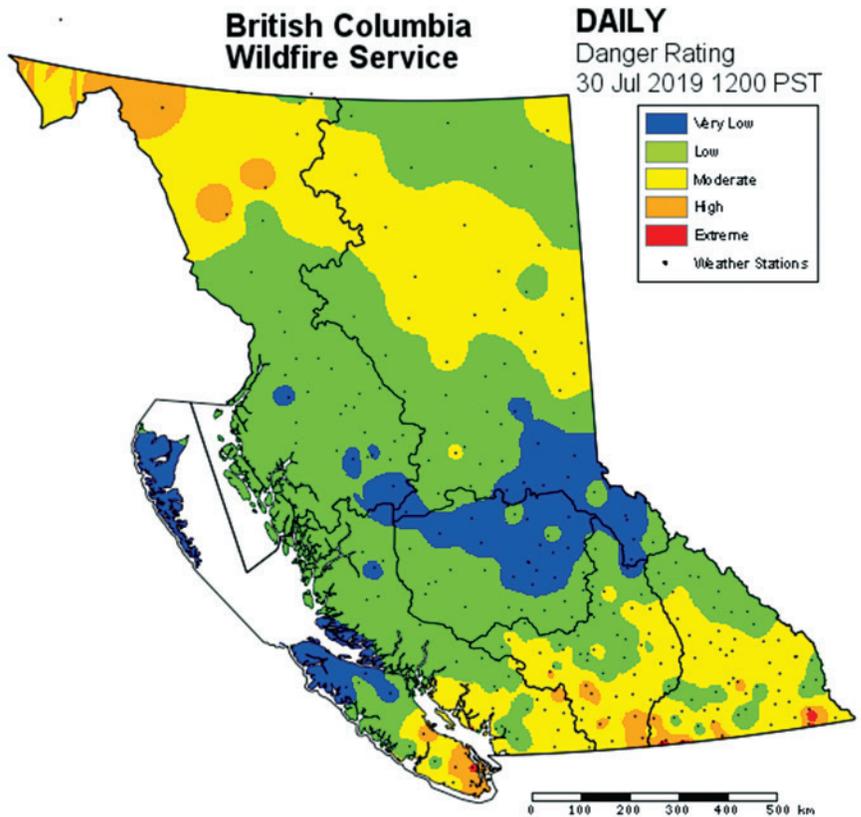
The BC Wildfire Service operates about 260 weather stations, which send reports on an hourly basis. These hourly weather observations, supplemented by data from other agency stations, support fire weather forecasting and the Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System (CFFDRS).

The computer-based CFFDRS is the primary fire management decision aid in Canada. With it, fire managers can assess the potential for ignition, spread and burning intensity. This information is used for making fire prevention, preparedness and suppression decisions, as well as other general fire management decisions.

Temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, wind speed and wind direction are recorded by the fully automated stations. This data is transmitted to BC Wildfire Service headquarters every hour from April through October, but less frequently and from fewer stations during the winter months. Data from other agencies' weather stations is also used and transferred electronically to headquarters.

### Fire Danger Rating

The Canadian Forest Weather Index (FWI) System is used to anticipate the potential for daily fire ignition across the country. The fire danger rating (i.e. the risk of a wildfire starting) for the province is updated daily at approximately 2 pm.



Two distinct categories are considered when assessing the fire danger rating:

**Human-caused fire** – The likelihood of human-caused fire occurring in an area on a particular day can be predicted based on: 1) how receptive the small, thin forest fuels are to ignition and spread (largely determined by the moisture content of these surface fuels); and 2) how much human activity is happening in or near the forest (creating “ignition sources”). Clear patterns of this activity can appear, with fires emerging in clusters close to populated areas, roads and railways.

**Lightning-caused fire** – Fire managers track the location of all the lightning strikes in their regions, in real time, every day of the fire season. They use this information, along with outputs from the FWI System, to tell them where pockets of lightning-caused fire can be expected to hold over (grow slowly beneath the surface or in dry rotten logs) and when lightning-caused fires might begin actively spreading.

The Canadian Forest Fire Behavior Prediction (FBP) System helps forest

managers assess how fast a specific fire could spread in a particular forest type, how much fuel it might consume and, ultimately, how intense that fire might be. The intensity of a fire is the factor a fire manager uses to determine what tactics and resources are needed to fight a fire.

The FBP system relies on 14 primary data inputs in five general categories: fuels, weather, topography, foliar moisture content, and type and duration of prediction. This data, when combined, provides an indication of expected fire behaviour. For example, the moisture content of surface fuels, together with the observed wind speed, yields the Initial Spread Index—an indicator of how fast a fire is expected to spread—which in turn is used to calculate a fire’s rate of spread (e.g., in kilometres per hour).

The FBP System also uses the indices of the Forest Fire Weather Index System and converts them to stand-specific predictions of fire behaviour for all the major forest types across Canada.

## What the danger class ratings mean

**Low:** Fires may start easily and spread quickly but there will be minimal involvement of deeper fuel layers or larger fuels.

**Moderate:** Forest fuels are drying and there is an increased risk of surface fires starting. Carry out any forest activities with caution.

**High:** Forest fuels are very dry and the fire risk is serious. New fires may start easily, burn vigorously, and challenge fire suppression efforts. Extreme caution must be used in any forest activities. Open burning and industrial activities may be restricted.

**Extreme:** Extremely dry forest fuels and the fire risk is very serious. New fires will start easily, spread rapidly, and challenge fire suppression efforts. General forest activities may be restricted, including open burning, industrial activities and campfires.

NOTE: The danger class map is intended for general public information only. For regulated forest operations, the danger class value must be derived from weather data representative of the site on which operations are being conducted.

Where discrepancies exist between the colour display on the weather maps and the numerical values posted for the weather stations, the posted numerical values shall take precedence for the purpose of implementing the Wildfire Regulation.

## Danger Class Report

A detailed danger class report provides estimated and forecast fire danger rating values for specific weather stations.

The danger class report is updated every day based on weather station data collected from around the province. To find out what the fire danger rating is near you, please select a region from the list below or view all regions.

## Current BC Wildfire Statistics

As of July 29, 2019	TOTAL	Coa	NW	PG	Kam	SE	Car
New Lightning-Caused Fires	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Human-Caused Fires	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
Total Fires to Date (current fiscal year)	570	108	82	130	108	97	45
Total Area Burned (Ha.) (current fiscal year)	12,632	304	2,820	7,798	1,403	120	187

New fires are those that were discovered on Jul 28, 2019. The current fiscal year is from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

Coa = Coastal  
Kam = Kamloops

NW = Northwest  
SE = Southeast

PG = Prince George  
Car = Cariboo

Cariboo Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=7>

Coastal Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=2>

Kamloops Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=5>

Northwest Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=3>

Prince George Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=4>

Southeast Fire Centre:

<http://bcfireinfo.for.gov.bc.ca/hprScripts/DgrCls/index.asp?Region=6>

Please note that the data within the danger class report is only relevant for the geographic location of the weather station. Persons carrying out industrial activities who want to apply the danger class information from this website must determine that the weather station location is representative of their operational area. 🌲