



Your take on Safety

Silviculture workers assist injured horseback rider

By Dr. Jordan Tesluk,
silviculture safety advocate

On April 7 this year, shortly after 4pm, a crew of tree planting workers spotted a woman by the side of the road near Northwest Bay Logging Rd in Parksville, Vancouver Island. The workers learned the woman's riding partner had fallen from a horse and was in need of medical attention. The crew promptly assisted by delivering aid and ensuring medical services could reach the injured rider. The crew received the following thank you:

“ To the tree planting crew I flagged down ... thank you! You didn't hesitate when I told you my horse riding partner was injured and I needed a blanket. You offered up a crew member to stay with me to help with the horses. Then you returned, waited until the paramedics were ready and all helped carry the clamshell stretcher to the waiting wheelie stretcher. The fella helping with the horses braved walking the anxious one out with me so we could keep them together.

– Teresa Shields ”

It is no surprise that the supervisor leading the workers is no stranger to emergency response. Only two months earlier, Liz Rhodes of Brinkman and Associates Reforestation was picked from the audience to participate in a live demonstration of first aid and emergency egress at the Western Forestry Contractors' Association annual conference. Liz provided an excellent demonstration of skills and has been a leader in conducting safety drills in her company. With this preparation, she was able to respond to the emergency with full confidence in her crew's ability to work as a team.

This is not the first time a forestry crew has aided the public. More than 10 years ago, Bill Spensley of Zanzibar Holdings provided life-saving emergency first aid to a woman injured in an ATV crash near Harrison Lake, and was awarded a commendation for his actions. Many others have helped members of the public in road incidents. Forestry workers travel many highways and resource roads where incidents may occur. Having a well-prepared crew and adequate equipment can be a life-saver not only for workers, but also for members of the public.

Emergency drills are a critical component for ensuring a calm and effective response. Employers are required to do emergency drills as part of SAFE Companies audit standards, and in accordance with Section 4.14(3) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. However, the benefit of drills extends far beyond the workplace, and helps build skills and qualities in workers that serve them well throughout their lives.

In British Columbia, those who stop to provide aid are protected by the BC Good Samaritan Act that states people providing emergency assistance to an injured, ill, or unconscious person are not liable for death or injuries that they may inadvertently cause in their attempts to help. There are exceptions in that people providing aid must not be grossly negligent, and it assumes that the Good Samaritan is not employed specifically for emergency response or gaining profit from the rescue.

In other words, if someone needs help, and you do your best to try, you won't be punished if things do not turn out well. In this most recent case, things turned out well and the injured horseback rider is expected to recover after surgery. The grateful public member commented further: "I'm sure the crew was at the end of their day and wanted

to be done but they didn't hesitate to step up. I'm a retired RN. It's team work that makes this life easier. This crew personified team work and grace."

Congratulations and thanks to Liz Rhodes, Bill Spensley, and all the many other forestry workers who have been there when needed and have never hesitated to help. 🌱



A Brinkman silviculture crew conducting a drill.
Photo: Robin McCullough.

Getting ready for a safe career in forestry



Two-year-old Artur, son of a SEBASE SAFE Certified company owner, has his PPE all figured out and is a Forest Safety News fan. Thanks to his Dad for sending in the photo! 🌱

ABOUT Forest Safety News

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