Safety Alert

What was hoped to halt the spread of the B.C. mountain pine beetle may actually be hazardous to human health. B.C.'s Ministry of Forests is testing thousands of trees in the Okanagan-Shuswap region near Penticton to see if they contain a dangerous concentration of arsenic.

For two decades, ending in 2004, as many as 100,000 trees throughout the Interior were treated with monosodium methane arsenate (MSMA) in a bid to stop the spread of the mountain pine beetle. Also known by its trade name, Glowon, MSMA's active ingredient is arsenic.

The ministry is warning loggers and firewood cutters to avoid the treated trees.

What does a tree treated with MSMA look like?

The tree will contain an axe scar that girdles the tree near its base. The axe blaze will be stained red from the chemical.

What Do I do if I encounter trees that were treated with MSMA?

- If you come across MSMA treated trees, **THEY ARE NOT TO BE TRANSPORTED TO A FACILITY** (mill or whole log chipper) - either leave standing or put in debris pile.
- The location of the tree(s) are to be reported to a Weyerhaeuser Supervisor who will pass the information on to the Ministry of Forests.