BC **Forest Safety** Council

Silviculture/Stand Tending/Fire Fighting

Safety Alert Type:
Silviculture/Stand Tending/Fire Fighting

Location: Prince George Woodlands

Date of Incident: 2008-05-14
Company Name: Canfor

Details of Incident:

On May 14, 2008, a large tick was discovered and removed from the scalp of a Silviculture staff member's head by the First Aid attendant on shift at the Northwood Pulpmill.

The staff member had noted a small sore lump on her scalp after returning home from working Saturday supervising planting contractors throughout the Pelican Operating Area. She believed that the lump was probably the result of a small bug bite, such as a spider; as the incident seemed fairly routine, she decided to monitor the bite over the next few days and take action if the situation changed.

Since Saturday, the immediate area surrounding the lump had become inflamed and red, while the back side of her head where the bite was located had become very sensitive and painful to touch in addition to increasing soreness of the neck muscles on the side affected by the bite. She had been checking out the area with mirrors at night but could not see more than a discolored lump between all the hair follicles.

Recognizing that the situation had changed, she brought her concerns to a few fellow co-workers within Prince George Woodlands. After a few second opinions, she decided to visit the Level Three First Aid Attendant on-site located adjacent to the Canfor Administration Centre at Northwood Pulpmill. The first aid attendant inspected the area of concern under a high-powered magnifying glass; he subsequently agreed that the lump appeared to be a tick.

The tick was removed by heating up a metal rod on a stovetop element and consecutively burning the tick in the backside, as this was agreed on by the individuals occupying the Pulpmill's security office, as well as the patient, as the known 'best practice' for safe tick removal. The tick proceeded to back itself out partially from the burning treatments, but was finally removed with force from tweezers. The affected area was cleansed with an antiseptic wipe and sent back to work.

After researching information regarding tick prevalence, associated diseases and action plans in the case of an incident over the internet, the tick was packaged alive and will be couriered to the BC Center for Disease Control in Vancouver for correct species identification and preserved for future reference. Though it is possible for the tick to be tested for the known bacteria and/or diseases that they may host, the Center will only conduct testing if the affected individual reports symptoms associated with the diseases.

As a result of this First Aid Incident, the following key messages are provided:

Recommended Preventative Actions:

1. Wear light colored clothing whenever possible; tuck in your shirt to your pants and your pants into your

work boots if possible to reduce any skin exposure;
2. Walk on cleared trails wherever possible, as ticks usually attach themselves to you as you pass through brush or tall grass (ticks do not fly and they also do not drop from tree crowns);
3. Use insect repellent at your discretion as it could deter tick bites.
4. Complete a 'tick check' for yourselves and your canine companions at the end of every field day, whether your skin was covered or not. Focus on areas of greater perspiration such as your scalp, underarms and groin area.
5. Do not stop if you have found one tick – continue to search your whole body (or that of your dog) to ensure there are no additional risks to infection.

More Information Contact Details:

See more details here.

Copyright © 2008 BC **Forest Safety** Council. All rights reserved.