

Forest Safety news

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SAFE Companies

Simpler SAFE Companies audits released

Simpler, more streamlined and more practical versions of SAFE Companies audits for large companies (BASE), small companies (SEBASE) and independent owner operators (IOO) — plus a new Independent Small Employer Audit (ISEBASE) for companies with 2–5 employees — were rolled out by the BC Forest Safety Council in June.

The revised audits, which result from a consultation process that began in December, are a direct response to forest industry input to make them easier and less time consuming while maintaining their effectiveness in reducing fatalities and injuries.

“The new versions focus people on the right things for integrating safety into their operations and let them concentrate on what they do best — improving their business,” says Steve Chaplin, Director of SAFE Companies.

KEY IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- » Audit questions are more focused and audit submissions requires less paperwork
- » Maintenance audits are now simpler than certification audits

- » Questions have been added about high-risk activities such as lockout, confined spaces and working at height
- » Elimination of redundant questions and topics
- » Easy-to-use forms for the audit submissions

Audit information packages were mailed to all SAFE Companies June 25, but companies are not required to use the revised versions until January 1, 2011. (Companies that have not yet received their information packages should contact the Council immediately at 1-877-741-1060.) The revised audits and safety program support forms are posted on the Council web site at www.bcforestsafesafe.org.

For support with the new versions, Council staff held sessions in 15 communities across B.C. As well, webinars were held for BASE companies, while IOO, ISEBASE and SEBASE companies can access tutorials on line or by mail.

“As companies use the revised audits, we welcome any further input on what works and what doesn’t to ensure the audit process functions well for everyone,” says Chaplin. “It’s all part of our continual improvement.”

SEE MAINTENANCE AUDITS SIMPLIFIED, P4 >

CEO's message

Council changing with industry



REYNOLD HERT

As people in the industry continue to make positive reductions in injuries, the Council is being asked to make changes in the type of support provided. One major change underway is the recent SAFE Companies audit revisions to reduce administrative paperwork. Other areas where industry is asking for support include an increase

in the amount and quality of training support, particularly for supervisors and incident investigation. A high priority in training is leadership skills development as individuals take on broader ranges of responsibility in difficult markets, with a focus on integrating safety into all aspects of a successful business.

SEE COUNCIL CHANGING WITH INDUSTRY, P2 >

Fallers must be in good standing

Starting in September, the Council web site will carry a list of the numbers (not names) of all certified fallers in good standing. This will let SAFE certified companies verify faller status on-line 24/7 since they need to ensure that hand fallers they employ are in good standing with the Council.

For fallers, keeping an up-to-date status improves chances of being hired by showing potential employers an active work history. To remain active on the list, overdue fees must be paid. When you receive your invoice in the mail, please use the enclosed business reply envelope to send in your payment or call 1-877-741-1060 to pay immediately by credit card.



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

Forest Safety News is published by the BC Forest Safety Council to inform members and others about workplace health-and-safety developments affecting the forest industry.

Have a story or comments? Contact us at news@bcforestsafesafe.org

Faller Supervisor pilot project welcomed

"Absolutely, they're very receptive to it." That's how Bill Bolton describes reaction to the pilot project that evaluated daily activities and skills of falling supervisors in the field over two months.

"What we're learning is that what they go through in the evaluation process actually forces them to be organized," says Bolton, who manages faller programs for the Council. He uses a rugged, hand-held PDA (personal digital assistant) to record data electronically right in the field — even take photos. Later, data tracking can be done to find strengths and problem areas.

"But the show stopper is that for some supervisors, they're so busy with other tasks this is the first time they've taken the necessary time to watch their fallers work. So they're seeing things they've never noticed before," says Bolton.

The pilot project is key to setting up faller supervisor/ bullbucker certification training and standards, which will be fully rolled out this fall.

A panel of 14 active falling supervisors from around the province volunteered their time to plan out the certification process. This led to 125 falling supervisors who have taken the training participating in a workshop in Nanaimo July 23 to provide feedback. One of the main points raised was that they need enough time in their workday to fulfill their primary supervisory responsibility of "watching their fallers work." This means not just checking on how they are doing and looking only at their workmanship, but actually watching them perform the tasks.

In the meantime, Council is working with industry advisory groups to find sources of funding that will help cover the cost of certification fees.

Council changing with industry

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Technical support is also being requested for a variety of areas including steep slope harvesting; marine regulation interpretation; logging truck driver training and ability to meet various codes; effective use of road user groups; avalanche guidelines; injury trends and benchmarking data; and other emerging issues. The Council is also changing the role of safety advocates to provide assistance in a wider range of industry needs.

Demographics management is a key area where industry recognizes that new people need to be attracted, and preparing them to work effectively without injury is necessary. As industry works to attract people, the Council is being asked to generate effective methods for getting the safety basics in place and a process for workers to advance their skills and upgrade safety endorsements.

All of these requests from industry were reviewed at the recent strategic planning session held with the Council's Board of Directors to determine the 2011 to 2013 work plan. The updated plan will be reviewed at the September board meeting, then posted on the web site. Thank you to everyone who participated and provided input to the Council for our future direction.



REYNOLD HERTZ, CEO & ACTING CHAIR



FALLING SUPERVISOR/BULLBUCKER BEN BERRY AND FALLER ASSESS FOG FOR HELI OPERATIONS IN THE BREM RIVER VALLEY AT TOBA INLET



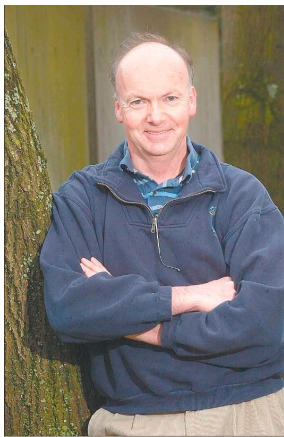
Ombudsman

Breaking the code of silence

Four words sum up Roger Harris's work as BC's Forest Safety Ombudsman: impartial, confidential, fair and timely. After a life-long career in the forest industry that gave him the opportunity to "see it, feel it and understand it" from many angles — from laborer to contractor to designing forest policy — Harris started as ombudsman in spring 2006. He has seen many changes since that time. Here is a brief introduction to his office:

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

The ombudsman is to be an independent, impartial assessor of what's going on in the industry today — to give comments, observations and recommendations.



ROGER HARRIS

The position was created to be an independent voice that could speak to issues as a code of silence existed in the industry. The fear was that if you raised issues about safety it could affect your employment or contract. Even licensees found it could impact their relationship with a regulator that might make things

difficult for them.

And you will never be successful in any industry at achieving any of your goals if you have an environment where people are afraid to talk about those issues in an open and transparent way.

WHERE DID THAT CODE OF SILENCE COME FROM?

Imbalances in power right across the board, in economic relationships and otherwise. In our office we apply it to safety, but to be honest in many cases over the years that I've done this, it's been very, very difficult at times to separate the safety issue from the economic one.

The cycle times in the road resource report are a great example. The calculation of cycle times was an interesting one, and the phrase I coined was the determination of a cycle time is a safety issue but the

calculation may be a financial or business one. And how do you separate them? If you don't put in all the appropriate factors to do a trip, which includes all the safety provisions, how do you get to a calculation that's an economic one?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUR OFFICE?

The reports we've done have been very effective tools for the forest industry to advance safety. The reports on training and certification and on resource roads are very good documents with sound recommendations, and it's been really pleasing to see that a lot of them have been adopted.

Our office also played an important role in bringing issues about the forest industry and safety to the public's attention. I think it needed that profile, especially when it came to not accepting fatalities.

A third and evolving role is that the Council has taken the opportunity to use the ombudsman's office as a mirror of their activities. The review of the SAFE Companies program is one example. It takes courage as an organization to do that, but also clearly demonstrates their commitment to safety.

SEE OMBUDSMAN: ANYONE CAN CALL, P4 >

Farewell to Steve Mueller



STEVE MUELLER

He came on a six-month contract. Now, four years later, Steve Mueller is stepping down in August from his more-than-full-time position as head of Forest Worker Development to return to forest safety consulting. He's also taking a break to travel with his family.

"Steve's developed a committed team focused on customer service and delivering a broad range of training and injury prevention services," says CEO Reynold Hert. "He's made a substantial contribution towards eliminating fatalities and serious injuries in the sector. We thank him for that and wish him the best."



Ombudsman: anyone can call

< CONTINUED FROM BREAKING THE CODE OF SILENCE, P3

Maintenance audits simplified

As part of streamlining the audit process, maintenance audits are now simpler than certification audits. The new versions require less paperwork and rely more on verifying that systems, such as a company's basic health and safety policy, are still in place. Also, many questions for maintenance audits — as well as certification audits — can now be answered simply by checking a box.

Maintenance audits should be submitted annually on the anniversary dates of SAFE certification. Every third year a full recertification audit is required.

Expect COR rebates in summer

Traditionally, SAFE certified companies have expected COR rebates in spring. But WorkSafeBC advises that a more realistic time to expect COR rebates is summer, and this year they should arrive in August. To encourage safe work practices, rebates are paid to employers who achieve COR certification and are in good standing with WorkSafeBC.

Besides the 10 percent COR rebate, an additional 5 percent rebate is now available to large companies as well as SEBASE companies with an injury management/return to work program who choose to use optional Element I in the submission forms.

Loggers' past celebrated

Traditional songs and stories of western loggers are centre stage at Victoria's Royal BC Museum this summer. Good Timber, an original musical revue, is an entertaining romp through the past set against a multimedia backdrop of rarely seen imagery of B.C.'s old-time logging history. Shows are at 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday until August 28.

WHAT'S BEEN A CHALLENGE?

One of the things I found early was that if the purpose of the office was to help facilitate or negotiate resolution between people while protecting their interests. It's really hard in the forest industry to try and solve a problem between two parties without letting the other party know who they are. In a place like Fort Nelson, for instance, people would know right way because there are only a limited number of contractors.

SO WHAT WAS YOUR APPROACH?

The vehicle I've used to resolve them I think, at the end of the day, is the most productive — a broader-based, provincial review. My approach was to look at the issue rather than the individual event.

What I found very early was it didn't matter if you worked in Fort Nelson, the southern interior, Prince George or Vancouver Island, the issues were exactly the same. So I decided the best way to protect the identity of people was to take their issue and deal with it on a broader provincial basis, and to undertake reviews like we did in our reports on resource road use and on training and certification [see www.bcforestsafe.org/newsroom/publications.html#ombudsman].

I think it gave power to the recommendations because I was able to say this isn't just an issue of personalities, this is actually a problem in the industry that exists in all four corners of the province, and we need to find a way to bridge that because it's an impediment to people feeling safe in their employment.

WHY WOULD SOMEONE CONTACT YOU?

Anyone — an individual, a company or even a regulator — can call if they feel there's something going on in their workplace that may impact safety for themselves or others. Once you call, we try to find ways to bring attention, priority and, hopefully, resolution for you, and it's completely confidential.

To contact the ombudsman, call 1-877-577-7766 or email harris@bcforestsafe.org.

Safety news briefs

WANTED: SAFETY LEADERS

August 31 is the deadline to nominate someone for one of two annual Leadership in Safety awards. The Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award goes to someone whose long career has involved unwavering commitment to safety and building a lasting culture of safety among forest workers. The Forest Safety MVP of the Year recognizes an

individual or group for a notable contribution to safety in their operation or company. Details are at www.bcforestsafe.org/2010_safety_awards.html.

SAFETY ALERTS

The Council's July and August monthly alerts focus on staying in the clear at www.bcforestsafe.org/AOM_July_2010 and two alerts in August: logging equipment emergency exits and resource road driving which can be found at www.bcforestsafe.org/Aom_August_2010

