

# New partnership offers greater support for forestry

## Pilot project set to start in January 2014

The Truck Loggers Association, WorkSafeBC, and the BC Forest Safety Council are launching a pilot project to help injured forestry workers recover and get back to work as safely and quickly as possible — all while helping the industry reduce its insurance premium rates.

This pilot project will see a Nanaimo-based injury claims team handle all coastal forestry claims. Workers and employers will have a single point of contact, through a team of dedicated WorkSafeBC case managers.

### Why is this important?

On average, B.C. workers return to work 60 days after injury. In forestry, that average is 108 days, mainly because of reporting delays throughout the industry.

### Here is the downside of delays:

Before it can open a claim, WorkSafeBC has to receive three items: form 6 (the form the injured worker completes), form 11 (the form the doctor completes), and form 7 (the form the employer completes).

Employers are required to report injuries to WorkSafeBC within three business days (this is a requirement of the *Workers Compensation Act*). Within the forestry sector, it takes employers about 21 days — most often because they're working in remote areas.

As a result of the delay, the forestry worker's claim, medical treatment, and return to work are also delayed.

The delay also increases costs for forestry employers, most of whom have very small operations.

## The root of forestry claims

- In 2012, the forestry sector held 15,298 workers and 4,135 employers.
- Ninety-seven percent of employers have fewer than 20 workers. Of those, 85 percent have fewer than five workers.
- In 2012, 38 percent of injury claims came from the coastal region.
- The duration of claims in forestry is 80 percent higher than in other industries.
- The average time it takes a forestry employer to report an injury is 21 days.
- Of the 894 workers with return-to-work claims in 2012, 82 percent returned to work, fewer than the BC average of 88 percent.
- In 2012, 40 percent of forestry claims were related to strains.
- Chainsaw and skidder operators suffered most of the injuries in Forestry in 2012.



## Benefits of the pilot

### Staying at work is good medicine

- Research shows the longer someone is off work, the less likely that person will return to work. However, someone who's been injured is often able to perform certain duties. In fact, going back to work may help the person recover more quickly and avoid other medical problems — like depression — that arise from being at home after an injury, isolated from co-workers and daily routines.
- Getting back to work after an injury allows people to stay physically and mentally active and reduces the risk of chronic pain. The pilot will stress the importance of safe and timely return-to-work.

### We can better support workers and employers

- For every 100 workers, five of those in forestry were injured in 2012, compared to 2.3 across all other sectors in B.C. combined. The most common injuries were strains, sprains, and fractures. By assigning a team of dedicated case managers to the forestry sector, we can better understand the root causes of injuries, help prevent them, and provide greater support to both injured workers and employers.

### There are financial benefits, too

- Improving return-to-work outcomes and reducing injuries can help lower insurance premiums across the forestry industry.
- By reducing the time it takes for WorkSafeBC to receive a form 7 from employers, workers can receive medical intervention more quickly.
- By helping workers return to work more quickly, forestry operations will experience fewer disruptions — caused by such factors as lost productivity, rehiring, training, and overtime.
- Reducing the time it takes for medical intervention by eight days translates into roughly \$1 million in savings. Reducing the delay by four days represents \$0.5 million.

## How to report an injury

- If you're an employer, file injury reports online at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com).
- If you're a worker, report your injury to WorkSafeBC at 1 888 WORKERS (1.888.967.5377), or #5377 for TELUS, Rogers, and Bell mobility customers.

If you need help filing your report, call the BC Forestry Safety Council's confidential toll-free hotline at 1.855.234.8360.

## We're here to help.