

## **The history of BC's Manufacturing Advisory Group (MAG)**

The Manufacturing Advisory Group (MAG) is the BC sawmill industry's safety working group that seeks to analyze emerging trends and issues within sawmill operations, leverage shared experiences and develop technological, process and safety management solutions to consistently and continuously improve safe operational performance for the BC sector to secure a trusted and respected competitive position in a global marketplace. There is no competition in safety. Together traditional sawmill competitors share the best safety practices to support a quest for zero incidents so that every worker may go to work each shift and return home safely to his/her family and community.

The MAG had its early beginnings in late 2008 early 2009, when there was initial consideration to have BC sawmills included in the then newly formed BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC), as the forest industry's Health and Safety Association (HSA).

### **Founding MAG members: Canfor, West Fraser, Tolko, Interfor and Dunkley Lumber**

Canfor, West Fraser, Tolko, Interfor and Dunkley Lumber were initial participants and agreed to meet regularly and share Medical Incident Rate benchmarking, and best practices to help support improved safety performance in all sawmill operations.

### **Weyerhaeuser, Hampton and Sinclair join MAG**

Some months later Weyerhaeuser, Hampton and Sinclair joined MAG and the group members shared best practices, discussed incidents and serious incident learnings as well as WorkSafeBC enforcement. Regulatory issues became a central focus of the growing group of sawmill MAG members.

In late 2009/early 2010 the MAG started quarterly benchmarking the Medical Incident Rate (MIR) as well as the Frequency and Severity of incidents for the sawmill, plywood and pulp operations represented in the MAG. This was initially done off the corner of a MAG member's desk and later with the help and support of Conifer in Prince George.

In October 2010, a number of MAG member CEOs met with the Minister of Labour, the WorkSafeBC CEO, and the CEO of the BC Forest Safety Council. At that time, Government and the regulator shared the view that the injury rate in the sawmill industry was too high and that the industry needed to operate more like the oil and gas industry. By comparison, industry's position supported by MAG data showed that the MAG injury rate performance was comparable to oil and gas; and, significantly lower than both the industry injury rate and the provincial injury rate.

The MAG CEOs considered the options and decided to support MAG as a group dedicated to finding and supporting safety solutions unique to a manufacturing environment. The disadvantage was there was the absence of funding for MAG, with members taking on projects and initiatives, working them, and then getting back to the group on progress and results.

MAG members were fully committed and supportive of sharing safety best practices and initiatives. The belief was, and remains, that there are only benefits to industry-wide continuous improvements in safety performance.

## **Western Forest Products joins MAG**

Western Forest Products Joined MAG in 2011 and at this point MAG members represented almost 80% of the sawmill industry. Even though MAG was not associated with a health and safety association at that time, WorkSafeBC started to request attending MAG meetings. The then BC Safety Authority (now Technical Safety BC) recognized that MAG represented a large percentage of the sawmill industry and actively engaged with the advisory group.

MAG also began sharing among members more of the serious issues within their operations including the serious injuries, fatalities and administrative penalty actions by WorkSafeBC. The information shared provided the opportunity for the group to learn and implement corrective actions before serious injuries and enforcement action occurred.

The safety group started to formalize its structure, by setting goals and objectives, establishing a term of reference, and through the members, providing regular feedback to the respective CEOs. The MAG representatives at this time included senior operating people in human resources, mill managers, operations, and regional managers (as there were only a handful of dedicated safety people in the industry).

As time progressed the MAG started to interact more with WorkSafeBC on regulatory issues and concerns over pending regulatory and policy change. MAG continued to grow and represent a larger and larger portion of the assessable payroll in the province. MAG also began to develop coordinated, consistent, and joint submissions to WorkSafeBC and was able to influence regulation review processes and policy changes.

## **Tragedy shapes increased focus and recommitment**

The tragic sawmill explosion incident at Babine Forest Products in Burns Lake in January 2012 that saw two workers killed and 19 injured, was a true test of the MAG network and broad sharing of ideas and best practices.

After the second incident at Lakeland in Prince George that killed two workers and injured another 22 workers, the industry CEOs met to discuss the challenge ahead of industry and the key outcomes needed to prevent similar wood dust explosions:

- Understand wood dust and its explosive nature
- Develop a wood dust audit
- Understand NFPA 664 and the implications to industry.

## **Ken Higginbotham led industry actions**

It was identified that a project lead was needed to co-ordinate the efforts of the CEOs, the industry and MAG. Ken Higginbotham, a retired Vice President of Canfor, was identified and he accepted the challenge. Ken was instrumental in shepherding the three initiatives with the help of FPInnovations, the insurance brokers such as Aon and Marsh, and insurers like Factory Mutual.

A CEO steering group was formed to work with Ken and the MAG, so MAG created two groups – a Steering Group and a Working Group. Ken would call or meet with the CEO steering group and advise of the progress on the three main initiatives and the regulatory activity around the wood dust issue.

Periodically the CEO group would meet with Ken and members of the MAG working group to better understand the issues and the activities. The steering group met with the senior levels of WorkSafeBC in the summer of 2012 and has continued to meet each year since then.

Up until this time MAG still had no source of funding and all initiative were funded by the MAG member companies taking on the projects. The CEOs agreed that there needed to be

adequate funding to cover the cost of the initiatives and Ken's time and expertise, and so they developed a funding formula through Council of Forest Industries (COFI). FPInnovations committed to share some of the costs with industry as research and innovation in engineered solutions would be required to best address dust in the manufacturing environment.

## **Wood dust sampling and analysis**

Wood dust sampling and analysis was conducted in 18 MAG facilities in all regions of the province and was completed by fall 2012. Representative samples were analyzed for the explosive nature by Factory Mutual and Chilworth. FPInnovations reviewed the data and published a report by mid-2013. Based on the analysis of the wood dust the insurance brokers and insurers with the help of MAG members developed a Wood Dust Audit for wood processing facilities and piloted the audit in the fall of 2013.

The CEOs mandated that all MAG companies conduct Wood Dust Audits on a three-year cycle, starting as a pilot in late 2013/2014. The NFPA Report was developed and published in 2014, and the three-year audit cycle became mandatory beginning in 2015.

The Wood Dust Audit was shared with the Alberta Council of Forest Industries, Forest Products Association, and Forest Association of Canada and with any company that expressed interest in it.

During 2012-2014 there was a great deal of sharing and collaboration among MAG members, focused on wood dust initiatives, programs, equipment and methodology of controlling wood dust. MAG members shared samples and information of wood dust containment and control with members, and the broader industry, through WorkSafeBC.

MAG also put on a number of information sessions on wood dust management, open to MAG and non-MAG member companies in the spring and fall of 2013. The sessions were well attended.

In 2014/15 the initial Gord Macatee Report came out.

## **The Gord Macatee Report 2014-2015-2016**

In response to the Babine and Lakeland sawmill explosions and the findings in a report by John Dyble, the WorkSafeBC Board of Directors appointed Gordon Macatee as Special Administrator in April 2014. Following this appointment, the Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister Responsible for Labour, issued a letter to the Chair outlining a mandate for the Administrator and setting out five priorities for action. On July 1, 2014, the WorkSafeBC Review and Action Plan was submitted to the Board and Minister Bond, containing 43 recommendations. Government and the Board accepted the report and all the recommendations on July 15, 2014. At that time, Macatee was re-engaged as a Special Advisor to the Board to monitor and report on the implementation of the recommendations. An interim report was submitted on February 25, 2015, at which time 23 of the recommendations had been fully implemented, and 11 were awaiting legislative amendments.

As of March 1, 2016, all 43 recommendations had been implemented, with a few minor adjustments. The adjustments were made based on stakeholder consultations and with the support of the author," from the final report on the WorkSafeBC Review and Action Plan: [www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/law-policy/reports/final-report-...](http://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/law-policy/reports/final-report-...)

## **MAG members choose the BC Forest Safety Council as their health and safety association (HSA) on a trial basis on April 1, 2015 till December 31, 2016**

The MAG CEOs decided to start a pilot program with the BCFSC where the MAG would receive the direction and control from the CEO group for industry activities and initiative and the BCFSC would act as the secretariat, and manage the HSA funding as directed by the MAG.

This move was a response on the part of the CEOs to the recommendation from Gordon Macatee that a formal forestry industry manufacturing HSA be established. Agreement was reached with the BCFSC on an organizational structure which would allow MAG to continue and to expand the work it had been doing since its formation.

Key performance indicators were established and approved by MAG to allow the CEOs to monitor performance of the new formalized HSA relationship.

Ken Higginbotham (in addition to the work with the MAG) also became Chairman of the Board of the BCFSC in 2014 and several MAG member representatives were also directors on the BCFSC Board.

Money provided by WorkSafeBC allowed the MAG to fund safety projects and initiatives.

In 2016 MAG began to develop strategies to communicate ongoing industry concerns to WorkSafeBC over the Certificate of Recognition (COR) program; the poor safety performers in the Sawmill CU; the

WorkSafeBC Manufacturing High Risk Strategy; regulation and policy review process; and, the conflict between the lockout regulations and the safeguarding standards and regulations.

The MAG CEOs met with WorkSafeBC senior leadership to communicate these concerns in July 2017 in the context of wanting to secure continuous improvement in industry safety performance and achieve mutually shared goals of further reduction/elimination of serious injuries.

## **COR served sawmills well; now to achieve the next level of safety performance measurement**

In October 2017, the MAG CEOs accepted the MAG recommendation to move away from the WorkSafeBC COR program and administered by one of WorkSafeBC's COR certifying partners, the BCFSC, to an industry-developed audit protocol recognized by the BCFSC's SAFE Companies' Program.

MAG member companies worked with the BCFSC to retain SAFE Companies Certification for 2018 and then plan to implement a MAG-SAFE audit in 2019 which best addresses the risks specific to the sawmill manufacturing environment.

The MAG-SAFE Audit consisted of 10 Fundamental Elements and a number of High Risk Modules such as lockout and fall protection. The objective was to secure the most relevant measurement of safety management systems in a process-driven manufacturing environment, consistent with the high-risk strategy elements identified by both industry and WorkSafeBC.

## **Higginbotham retires and hands over leadership to Lehane at the end of 2017**

Ken Higginbotham retired in 2017 from the MAG and as BCFSC Chairman. Dave Lehane, a retired West Fraser VP, was hired in early 2018 to replace Ken on MAG and was appointed Chair of the BCFSC Board of Directors.

## **MAG joins the BCFSC permanently on January 1, 2018**

After a successful extended pilot period, MAG informed the BCFSC that it had decided to end the pilot as of January 1, 2018 and become a regular part of the industry safety advisory groups that make up the heart of the BCFSC.

## **Enhanced data collection allows for targeted proactive responses in 2018**

Data analysis and monthly benchmarking started in 2018 using EHS Analytics. Additional benchmarking of leading indicators is planned for 2019 with the objective to support continuous improvement in performance.

## **Dedicated BCFSC resource hired at the beginning of 2019 to focus on manufacturing**

Bill Laturnus was hired in January 2019 as a Senior Safety Advisor, Manufacturing. He was one of the auditors who helped MAG develop and pilot audit the new MAG-SAFE tool.