

Supervisors

Summary of Assessments

There are several types of assessments that need to be completed by companies to address possible hazards identified on worksites and to formulate plans and measures to mitigate those hazards that workers are exposed to. Assessments that are needed are usually identified through pre-work inspections; site inspections; contracts, work plans; site plans or logging prescriptions and by workers on the work site.

When potential or confirmed hazards are identified, operations should not commence until the assessment is completed and the corrective actions or controls are formulated and communicated to the workers.

Assessments that could be required include:

Danger Tree Assessments – Trees that because of their condition (damaged, old and decayed) and location could be a hazard to workers need to be assessed with treatment and control options including placing a no work zone around the danger tree(s) or removing the danger tree (falling). Training for Wildlife Danger Tree Assessors (WDTA) is available for specific activities including Forest Harvesting and Silviculture; Parks and Recreation; and Wildland Fire Safety. More information on WDTA training is available from the Wildlife Tree Committee - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/wildlife-habitats/wildlife-tree-committee/assessor-s-courses>

Steep Slope Assessments – As specified by WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation 26.16, on all slopes over 35% (wheeled equipment) or 40% (tracked equipment) where mechanical harvesting is planned and the manufacturer's maximum slope operating stability limit is not known. A Steep Slope Logging Resource Package with a risk assessment and site pre-work form and safe work procedures are available from http://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/res_xSteepSlopeLogging.pdf

Steep Grade Assessments - WorkSafeBC regulation 26.2 and the associated Guideline 26.2-2 describes the requirements for hauling logs on steep grades (greater than 18%), and that risk assessment and safe descent procedures are to be developed. FP Innovations has developed an Android app for mobile devices to help determine appropriate payloads and descent speeds for loaded log hauling trucks travelling on slopes with curves and grades greater than 18%. There is also a Steep Grade Descent Guidelines app based on a spreadsheet tool available, that allows users to input various road parameters such as grade, length, the presence of a switchback, and traction level. More information available from <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2004>

First Aid Assessments - Employers are responsible for first aid in the workplace. A first aid assessment is completed to determine the first aid needs of a workplace. The findings of the first aid assessment are then reviewed and necessary steps taken to put proper first aid equipment, resources and procedures in place. More information on performing first aid assessment are available from <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/first-aid-requirements> and forms are available from <https://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2650>

Worker Assessments – All workers should have regular (e.g. monthly), documented assessments. Worker assessments can be completed with regular site inspections. The regulations don't specify how often, but having regular assessments are key to determine that workers are:

- Performing their work safely and competently;
- They understand the work plan, safe work procedures and emergency response plan;
- That their equipment and tools are in good operating conditions;
- Are they wear the appropriate PPE and in good condition;
- Mentally and physically ready for work;
- Healthy with no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or other health issues.

It is also important for the supervisor to “connect” with workers, maintain regular open, non-judgemental communication. Assessments of young or new workers should be completed more frequently (e.g. daily to weekly).

Avalanche Assessments – If your work takes you into avalanche terrain, you need a method to determine whether a slope is safe enough to cross or work near. WorkSafeBC’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 4.1.1 requires all employers whose workers travel through, work around or within a potential avalanche hazard area to have a qualified person conduct a risk assessment and if there is risk of an avalanche, develop and implement appropriate avalanche safety plans and /or a program. Avalanche Canada is a source for avalanche information and warnings (<https://www.avalanche.ca/>) and avalanche bulletins are available from Parks Canada (<https://avalanche.pc.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx?d=TODAY>). Industry training and the Guidelines for Snow Avalanche Risk Determination and Mapping in Canada is also available from the Canadian Avalanche Association (<https://www.avalancheassociation.ca/>). Avalanche hazard alerts have been posted on the BC Forest Safety Council website, examples including https://www.bcforestsafe.org/AOM_March_2010 and <https://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2128>.

Wildfire Hazard Assessments – Wildfire hazard assessments and hazard abatement are key activities in reducing the potential threat of wildfires arising from fuels left on the land base following industrial activities. Under the Wildfire Act a person carrying out an industrial activity or prescribed activity is required to assess and abate fire hazards as necessary. In conjunction with Natural Resources Canada, the BC Wildfire Service has developed A Guide to Fuel Hazard Assessment and Abatement in British Columbia to assist those carrying out industrial activities determine whether or not fuel hazard abatement is necessary, and if so, the threshold necessary to comply with the legislated obligations.

The guide provides a procedure to determine fuel hazards created by an industrial or prescribed activity on forest land and contains a straightforward step by step instruction to enable a person to determine when fuel hazard abatement is needed in relation to the fire risk, proximity to interface, and, fuel loading and arrangement. The guide is available at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status/prevention/for-industry-commercial-operators/hazard-assessment-abatement>

Terrain Stability Assessments – Reconnaissance and detailed terrain mapping is completed by terrain stability professionals, but forestry supervisors can make on-site observations and assessments using field indicators such as watching for recent landside scars; jack-strawed trees; landside debris piled on lower slopes; curved or sweeping trees; and poorly drained or gullied fine-textured materials on slopes >50%. Table 4 in the Mapping and Assessing Terrain Stability Guidebook is a good guide - <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/hfp/external!/publish/FPC%20archive/old%20web%20site%20contents/fpc/fpcguide/terrain/zipped/terrain.pdf> and A Guide for Management of Landslide Prone Terrain in the Pacific Northwest – Land Management Handbook Number 18 is also a good resource - <file:///fs-van/Users/Chow/My%20Documents/Forms%20Project/References/Land%20Management%20Handbook18%20-%20Management%20of%20Landside%20Prone%20Terrain.pdf>.

Weather Assessments and Shutdowns for Rain and Snow – Checking the weather is a regular part of forestry and natural resource operations, and should be checked frequently during the day and documented using weather reports and observations. The weather should be checked more frequently if weather is unstable There are many weather apps for cell phones available, the most popular being

Environment Canada; Weather Network; and Accuweather. The usual procedure for Mariners is to check the weather channel on the marine radio before going out on the water.

Rain and Snow Shutdown guidelines are required for many operations for safety and environmental reasons and are included in many forestry contracts. Rain and snow fall measures should also be completed before operations begin every day and throughout the day, and should be documented. Typical rainfall shutdown guidelines are to shut down when rainfall reaches 100mm over 24 hours.

Example rainfall shutdown guidelines are also found in the Guide for Road Construction Design Maps - <https://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/Training%20Guide%20-%20Road%20Design%20Elements.pdf> and

Fresh wet snow greater than 4 to 6 inches accumulations or freezing rain events with -2 to +2 degrees C temperature range were found to be criteria for shutting down log hauling -

<http://www.bcforestsafe.ca/node/2869>

Rain and snowfall shutdown guidelines are different for every region of the province, so check with your local resource managers.