

Safety Alert of THE MONTH

June 2010

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

Recognizing Hazards and Risks: Silviculture Workers

Approximately one third of all tree planting and cone picking claims submitted to WSBC from 1997 to 2001 were classified as overexertion or repetitive motion injuries. Silviculture workers such as tree planters are predisposed to this type of injury because of the repetitive nature of their work. Others who may benefit from the information in this alert include firefighters, surveyors, nursery workers, equipment operators, manual tree fallers and others whose jobs involve repeated physical motion.

What is a musculoskeletal injury (MSI)?

An MSI is an injury or disorder of the muscles, ligaments, joints, nerves, blood vessels or related soft tissue, including sprains and inflammations, which may be caused by work.

Signs and symptoms of MSIs:

- Swelling, redness, difficulty in moving the body part
- Tenderness along the course of the tendon
- Numbness, tingling and pain

RADAR – Recognize and Assess the risk, Develop a plan, Act safely, and Report

Using the Council's RADAR approach may help you reduce the likelihood of MSI. There are three main factors in every task that contribute to the risk of injury: position, weight and tools. When assessing your MSI risk, ask yourself some key questions: do you have the right tool(s) to minimize the risk of MSI, are you using the right body posture or grip, how much weight are you carrying, are you properly hydrated, and are you getting adequate rest and recovery time?

If you begin to experience any signs or symptoms of MSI, early response is key to preventing injury:

- **STOP** work and report to your supervisor, they will advise on adjusting your work situation, techniques or tools to avoid further injury or;
- Report to first aid, and the first aid attendant will advise the supervisor if you require additional medical aid, or can return to work with modified or light duty responsibilities.

With early intervention, MSIs can be treated successfully. If ignored, the result can be a painful injury leading to time lost from work and a reduced ability to enjoy time away from the job.

Additional Resources

The Council has produced a RADAR presentation targeted at silviculture contractors and workers. There are also crew talks addressing the prevention of MSIs using the RADAR system.

The BCFSC website has detailed information on how you can reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries in repetitive physical work such as tree planting.

