Training Supervisors for Success

Front line supervisors are critical in all operations. They provide leadership, expert instruction and problem-solving ability. It is challenging for supervisors to respond to the wide variety of workplace situations, so how can forest companies help and support supervisors in these demanding situations?

One way is to ensure all supervisors are equipped with the basics before they start – all the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to be successful in the job. A comprehensive list of forest industry supervisor competencies gives employers a baseline to train and evaluate their supervisors. Elevating all supervisors to a base standard of competency criteria will improve operational and safety performance significantly.

The BCFSC is working with two industry groups to build training materials to help supervisors reach a foundational level of skill and knowledge. The Manufacturing Advisory Group (MAG) and the BC Safe Forestry Program (SAC) are currently updating existing training materials and working to identify the key competencies for successful supervisors.

The current modules of BCFSC's three Forest Supervisor Training courses focuses on forestry operations but work is underway to tailor this training to mill supervisors. Representatives from MAG are reviewing and providing input to adapt BCFSC's existing supervisor training resources for mill settings. The concepts of due diligence, communication and leadership will be maintained using manufacturing examples and scenarios to make the information more relevant to mill workers.

A SAC sub-committee of experienced silviculture managers and supervisors are working to build units of competency specific to tree planting operations as well as confirming general competencies needed by all supervisors. This process will result in tailored silviculture assessment forms managers can use to assess new or experienced supervisors. If any gaps are identified, online and classroom training resources will be developed.

Keep an eye on the BCFSC training site or follow us on Facebook for the updated information on these new training offerings and assessments.

New Online Mechanized Harvesting and Yarding Assessments and Training

Individual worker assessments are an important part of all safety programs. Supervisors often assess the operation by conducting a high-level overview of the phases and assume that if things are going well at each level, each individual operator or worker must also be doing well and have what they need to do the job. However, spending one-on-one time with a worker is very valuable as it enables a supervisor to get detailed information that may be missing from the high-level overview. This is where new worker competency assessment tools come in. These tools support busy supervisors with an organized and efficient process to easily conduct worker assessments.

The BCFSC, along with industry experts, have developed worker assessment forms specific to mechanized harvesting and yarding worksites. These forms are easy to complete using a checklist-style format perfect for use on tablets and mobile phones. The fillable PDF assessment forms and related training are now available on the BCFSC website.

This dedicated webpage also features a short video explaining how to best use the assessments at the workplace. There are also links to training materials if any gaps in knowledge, skills or attributes are found during the assessments. Free, online training is available through BCFSC's Learning Centre. Completed training programs will be issued a certificate of completion. There is also downloadable training material available for companies who prefer to conduct their own training but want to follow the industry standard.

The Basic Forest Worker assessment should be used for new workers to the forestry. This basic assessment combined with a job specific assessment will provide a complete overview of the job requirements. For example, if you are assessing a brand-new skidder operator - complete the Basic Forest Worker assessment first to ensure the operator has a good foundation of knowledge such as common hazards and other logging fundamentals. Once they have the basic knowledge, move onto the more technical assessment for Skidder Operators. Assessments and training are available for the following jobs:

- Basic Forest Worker
- Yarding
  - Grapple Yarder Operator
  - Hook Tender
  - Landing/Utility Person
  - Chokerperson
  - Rigging Slinger
  - Tower Operator
- Mechanized Harvesting
  - Feller Buncher Operator
  - Skidder Operator
  - Processor Operator
  - Hydraulic Log Loader Operator
  - Forwarder Operator
  - Hoe Chucker Operator

Assessor and trainer information is also available online to help supervisors, worker trainers or those completing one-on-one assessments.

If your company uses these tools, we would love to hear from you. Your valuable feedback is necessary to keep the information current and relevant. Contact us at **training@bcforestsafe.org** with any suggestions or ideas for improvements.

Hazard Recognition, Risk and Control Training

Last August, the BCFSC was approached by Conifex Timber Inc. and asked to deliver Hazard Recognition, Risk and Control Training. While various training materials are available, at this point there is no standardized training for our industry. The Manufacturing Advisory Group (MAG) is currently working to develop some training for 2021. Updates on the MAG training are available on our website.

Our training team engaged a consultant to prepare content and deliver the training. It is focused on basic hazard identification, risk assessment and controls in a sawmill and manufacturing settings, tailored to Conifex's requirements. We also used this project as an opportunity to test out a new webinar system.

In January 2021, we successfully delivered eight hours of training through the system with lessons learned throughout the process regarding the type of learning platform and the content. Our key takeaways were to stick to the basics, add more depth to the Field Level Hazard Assessment process and add more interactive activities. These takeaways will be used to improve future deliveries. The material will be shared with MAG to expedite the development of their training and help tailor content that meets manufacturing needs.

Kristen Stinson, VP & GM, Corporate Services, Conifex Timber Inc. said "Continuous learning in effective hazard identification, assessment and control is an essential part of any prevention program. This course offers a practical and consistent application for workers to control hazards so that everyone, in any role, can go home safely."

Progress on the MAG course will be published in future editions of the Forest Safety News.

Risk Assessment and Using a Risk Matrix on Resource Road

By Overlanding BC


Photo provided by Overlanding BC

Driving on resource roads presents drivers with a unique set of challenges like road construction, the time of year, other (potentially larger) vehicles on the road, visibility and obstacles like uneven terrain, wash-outs and water accumulation. These roads require drivers to understand the risks involved and have the ability to evaluate that risk using various methods. One method is doing a Hazard Assessment using a Risk Matrix. The following is an example an incident that uses a Risk Matrix to aid in a successful outcome for the worker.

In this situation, a person was riding an ATV when they came across a large puddle they needed to navigate. They did the right thing - they stopped, assessed the situation and then measured the depth of the puddle. The worker even took extra precautions by calling a supervisor to their location to double check that they could navigate through the puddle successfully. They both established that it was safe to proceed and the worker rode the ATV slowly through the puddle without incident.

On the return trip, they encountered the same puddle but this time they were on the opposite side. They proceeded through it again slowly as they had already done so successfully, earlier that day. Either the puddle had changed throughout the day or it was deeper on one side than the other. Half-way through it, the ATV began to sink and tip to one side. Although they made it to safety, the ATV had to be towed out and sent in for maintenance and repairs.

The assumption that the puddle was in the same state, from the first encounter to when they came across it from the other direction was an example of an inadequate Hazard Assessment. This assumption led to an incident, which cost the company down time for a worker and a vehicle. It also could have led to injury to the worker and potential workdays lost.

If the worker had used a Risk Matrix in their hazard assessment, the outcome would have been different for their return trip. Using the matrix, the puddle situation rates as a 2. (See Illustration). The situation warranted a review and the driver should not have assumed the conditions were favourable in both directions. Consider how the risk would change if they were in a pickup truck. The rating, may, or may not decrease depending on the risk exposure present.

Probability How likely is it to hurt someone?	Severity How severely could it hurt someone?			
	Kill or disable	Serious injury or long term illness	Medical treatment and time off work	Minor first aid treatment
Very likely Could happen anytime	1	1	2	3
Likely Could happen sometime	1	2	3	4
Unlikely Could rarely happen	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely Could happen, but probably never will	3	4	5	6

Evaluate what controls and / or Substitutions are necessary.

Rating 1: Stop work; consult supervisor; seal off work area; determine control(s).

Rating 2: Stop work; consult supervisor; determine control(s) and safe work procedures.

Ratings 3/4: Contact supervisor; follow safe work procedures; determine additional control(s) required.

Ratings 5/6: Strictly adhere to safe work procedures.

The exposure to risk is for an ATV rider is high, especially when there are unseen dangers such as cross-ditches, cambered, or crowned surfaces, pools or puddles on the road, slumps or fall-off of the road surface, etc.

Resource Road Drivers require extra diligence when assessing the road ahead. To keep our exposure to risk to a minimum, the Risk Matrix should be understood and fully utilized even when engaging in a task that may seem routine and familiar. There is always a possibility that something unexpected might arise and lead to an unanticipated event. When risk is not evaluated and understood, the outcome can often be undesirable.

Find out more about Risk Matrices & Risk Assessment.