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**BC Forest Safety**

Safety is **good** business

**CANCER PREVENTION**

**HEALTH AWARENESS:**

**CANCER RISKS AND PREVENTION**

# HEALTH AWARENESS: CANCER RISKS AND PREVENTION



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ DISCUSSION FACILITATED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(IF APPLICABLE)

Use this **Crew Talk** to lead and document a worksite conversation on cancer in forestry workers, and how lifestyle factors that you can control can impact the risk of developing a cancer.

## KEY POINTS:

- Cancer describes over 100 different diseases, some of which are treatable, while some have very high mortality rates.
- One in two Canadians will develop a cancer during their lifetime and one in four will die from it.
- Cancer-causing hazards in forestry work include UV light, diesel exhaust, benzene in fuels and other chemicals. Exposure to hardwood dust increases the risk of cancer in the nasal sinuses.
- Many, but not all cancers, are linked to lifestyle. Tobacco use, a low-fibre/high animal-fat diet, alcohol consumption, high stress levels, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle are all linked to increased cancer rates.
- Early detection is important for cancer survival. Check with your health care provider and follow through with any recommended cancer screening procedures.

## DISCUSSION LEADS:

- What risk factors for cancer are present in your workplace and what can you personally do to protect yourself and your family from the effects of getting an occupational cancer?
  - Exposure to exhaust, fuel or other chemicals (use the appropriate PPE such as gloves to reduce contact. Practice good hygiene and wash hands before eating or drinking. Follow safe-handling procedures provided on Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for any chemicals used).
  - Exposure to UV light (avoid sunburn).
  - For drivers, equipment operators and administrative workers; the sedentary nature of the work could be considered an occupational hazard (get some physical activity every day).
  - High levels of stress and/or fatigue (get enough rest and practice some stress reduction techniques).
- What can you do on a personal level to lower your lifestyle-related risk of getting cancer?
  - Enroll in a program or talk with your health care provider about how to stop smoking or chewing tobacco.

- Limit your alcohol intake to less than one serving per day for women and two for men.
  - Get the recommended 150 minutes of moderately vigorous physical activity every week.
  - Increase your consumption of unprocessed fruits, vegetables and whole grains; avoid high sugar foods, trans fats and charring fat in cooking.
  - Adopt a stress-reduction program and commit to getting more sleep.
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of getting a cancer-screening test?
    - These tests are associated with false positives but if you are over 50 or have other risk factors including primary family members with cancer, you should discuss these tests with your health care provider. They save lives.

## RESOURCES:

Reducing cancer risk factors:  
[itsmylife.cancer.ca](https://itsmylife.cancer.ca)

Good strategies for improving lifestyle factors:  
[bchealthyiving.ca/healthy-living/health-inequities](https://bchealthyiving.ca/healthy-living/health-inequities)

Information on occupational cancers:  
[worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/injuries-diseases/occupational-cancer](https://worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/injuries-diseases/occupational-cancer)

More information on WHMIS and Safety Data Sheets (SDS):  
[ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis\\_ghs/sds.html](https://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/whmis_ghs/sds.html)

Wood Dust Health Effects:  
[ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/wood\\_dust.html](https://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/wood_dust.html)

Canadian Cancer Society Prevention & Screening:  
[cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/reduce-cancer-risk/helpful-tools/?region=sk](https://cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/reduce-cancer-risk/helpful-tools/?region=sk)

**DOCUMENTATION:** I CONFIRM THAT I TOOK PART IN THIS DISCUSSION AND COMMIT TO FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES FOR REDUCING THE RISK OF CANCER:

PRINT NAME:

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SIGNATURE:

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