



Dazy (Dave) Weymer is well-known in BC forestry with over five decades of experience in BC logging with four of those decades working as a certified Faller. He is a member of the BCFSC Program Committee and co-chair of Falling Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC), the FTAC rep for both the Coast Harvesting Advisory Group and the Faller Standard Advisory Committee. He still does the occasional falling and arborist work in between danger tree blaster training.

Dazy has been thinking about submitting this article for a long time. He felt it was important to share because he knows first-hand the importance of supporting new forestry workers – to ensure they are doing their work with a clear head and making good decisions without distraction. Forestry is a high-risk industry and bad decisions can be very costly not just for individuals but for industry as a whole.

## Be Kind

By Dazy Weymer

Everyone has been in the situation of either having just screwed something up, or at least thinking that they've just screwed something up, and feeling like a dork. More than once in your life, I'd guess. Often enough the overbearing priority rolling around in your head, is that you have to fix things. When we are in this sort of state, we're much more likely to make bad decisions and end up doing something that makes things even worse. And maybe dangerous.

Anyone who has done Switchback training will have a better understanding of what happens in a person's head in those situations. A better understanding of what is going on in your head can help you avoid doing more dumb stuff and potentially causing an accident.

The other side of this coin is what your impact on other people can be. As in what we do that can drive others into that screwed up headspace. You have a huge power to do this if you're a supervisor, and in particular if you're a supervisor or trainer of new or young workers who are still working their way into the industry. It's important that you handle that power with caution.

New or young workers starting out are generally very concerned about how they're doing and what people think of them. Am I doing well enough? Are they going to keep me? Does the boss like me? What do the other guys on the crew think of me? Am I being too cocky? Am I being too much of a worry wart? Have I got what it takes to make it here?

I've been in operations where it sometimes seems like people get a kick out of harassing the rookie. And I've seen bosses that not only let it happen, but join in. It's really easy to send that trainee to work stressed out and worrying about whether they'll still have a job tomorrow, rather than having their mind cleanly on what they're doing. This does not make for a safe, mind-on-the-job young worker. And it could easily contribute to that accident that none of us want to have happen.

Admittedly, a rookie may occasionally need to be cut down a few notches, maybe for you to tolerate them, and maybe for their own safety. Good thought needs to go into when and how you're going to talk with the worker to get your message across. Don't send them back to work in a screwed-up state of mind, where they're not doing their best thinking. This is a worker who is already at a higher risk because of a lack of experience. You do not want to send them even deeper into danger.

For sure you don't want anyone being overly cocky, but you do want them comfortably confident and clear-headed. Be clear with them but be kind. Send them out on a positive note.

There's no room for mind games in the forest industry.

Don't mess with people's heads, and don't let co-workers mess with them either. 🙏



# Faller Supervision: A Falling Safety Advisor's Perspective on a Risk-Based Approach

By David Adshead, BCFSC Falling Safety Advisor

When it comes to supervising risk factors, there are three main components to consider:

1. **The environment** - including timber, terrain, type of project and weather factors.
2. **Activity** (other phases) - such as road building, yarding and loading.
3. **Human factors** - consider each crew member, their experience level, their personalities, influences from their personal lives and think about how those factors may affect them as well as other members of the crew.

When planning the work, it is important to identify areas with higher risk factors. Ask yourself; What keeps you up at night? Then prioritize these risks with the necessary attention and controls.

An excellent place to start is completing the required block documents which help identify the focus areas. In turn, this will help you identify where you'll need to focus your attention.

1. The Emergency Response Plan (ERP) needs to be current and site-specific with clear instructions and a continually tested communication method. It needs to be supported with the appropriate first aid equipment and attendants. All barriers to first aid must be considered and planned for including how two fallers working alone on a site can have an effective ERP.
2. The site hazard assessment needs to recognize all the general hazards on the worksite. Hazards can include stand conditions, roadside debris, phase congestion, weather,

human factors and environmental factors related to seasons. All identified hazards need to have a described method of control the faller can use to mitigate the hazard.

3. Ensure the initial safety meeting and work plan include man check and qualified assistance details, communication details, worker placement and location of other phases in the block or nearby. It should also have access controls such as sign and gate location, and alternate falling methods available, etc.
4. The block plan needs to be reviewed with each crew member and include their sign-off before starting any work.

## Meaningful Faller Inspections at Intervals Appropriate to the Risk

You've heard the term '*meaningful faller inspections at intervals appropriate to the risk*'. What does *intervals appropriate to the risk* mean? Consider the environment, activity and human factors previously identified when determining *intervals appropriate to the risk*.

- A new or inexperienced worker will be a priority for the Falling Supervisor to ensure they are qualified for the timber and terrain when placing them in their work areas. A trainee faller would require continual supervision and frequent ongoing inspections.
- Stand condition may require more frequent visits from the Falling Supervisor regardless of the faller's experience simply due to the elevated risk of the timber and terrain.

- Personal factors. Is a normally easy-going person uncharacteristically quiet or irritable one morning? This should prompt the Falling Supervisor to check in with the faller to determine if they are fit for work with the ability to focus on their tasks safely.

There are varying faller visits or inspections levels - from a simple visual walk-through of a faller's work area and a chat with the faller, to a full inspection. What you identify as an elevated risk situation will determine the appropriate action and level of interaction with each faller and each visit.

What is a meaningful faller inspection? Rather than a scheduled Friday or Tuesday visit to confirm the faller is falling to the standard by measuring some stumps and looking at their past work, be proactive! Watch the faller fall trees and observe the decisions they are making and the process they use. Look for opportunities to provide coaching. This means identifying things to correct, adjust, add or improve, and provide feedback to the faller. Coach them on how to make the identified changes. Be sure to document what you have identified, the actions taken and any potential follow up that may be required.

Observe when they look up and how often. Consider how they manage their work area? How far do they escape from the tree and wait for the canopy to settle? Are they using special falling techniques? Is there room for improvement or discussion? Can they describe the hazards in their immediate work area? Do they have reasonable controls in place for any hazards identified? Have

*Continued on page 15...*

they assessed the danger tree that may impact where they are currently working? Do they have a reasonable plan for removing it?

Use ongoing walk-throughs of a faller's work area to identify workmanship trends that may prompt a faller inspection. Are there any red flags noted, such as some unclean undercut trends or what appears to be deeper than preferred undercuts? If so, this means an action is needed and should prompt the Falling Supervisor to watch the faller work to identify if there are reasons why the problem is appearing. Use the opportunity to make corrections and follow-up to ensure the adjustments are achieved.

## Qualifications of a Faller

A frequently asked question is 'How do you determine if a faller is qualified?' The quick answer is - **by observing and listening**. It starts with checking references for past work and experience and then observing how they present themselves, looking at their tools and PPE. Place them in the work area and talk about the hazards they are seeing. Ask how they would manage them. Discuss their work plan and listen to what they are saying. Is their plan reasonable and safe? Does it

take into account safe work distances from other workers? Does it consider avoiding unnecessary brushing? Is it a safe place to lay wood for processing? Lastly, watch them work - observing their saw handling and safe work procedures. Do they follow their plan? Do they make reasonable adjustments to their plan as needed?

A big tell for me as a Falling Safety Advisor is risk management. Does the faller assess all possible hazards in their work area before starting their saw? Is their risk management plan appropriate to keep them safe? A key component of 'qualified' is recognizing hazards and knowing how to control them. This holds true for fallers and Falling Supervisors.

## Training for Falling Supervisors

I believe next crucial step in reducing incidents in our profession is a positive implementation of an effective continuous improvement program. The BCFSC is reworking and upgrading the Falling Supervisor course. The new upgraded program will be more robust and informative to better prepare Falling Supervisors for their roles. It will provide knowledge and tools for Falling Supervisors to

become more effective coaches for their hand fallers team. To ensure we are meeting the needs of industry, we are engaging Falling Supervisors, contractors and the Falling Technical Advisory Committee as part of the process. Once the upgrade is ready, the course will be piloted and fine-tuned, taking into account feedback from the instructors and participants. Next year, we plan to roll out the updated Falling Supervisor course. I am excited to see the final results as I believe it will strengthen the effectiveness of practical Faller Supervision.

One of my advocacy roles as a Falling Safety Advisor is to support Falling Supervisors in recognizing risk factors and providing meaningful, proactive faller inspections. I see my role as a coach for Falling Supervisors, helping them hone their skills and build knowledge, much like Falling Supervisors that promote continual improvement for their fallers.

I encourage you to contact us with questions or requests about our advocacy programs. Contact us toll free 1.877.741.1060 or by email at [faller@bcforestsafesafe.org](mailto:faller@bcforestsafesafe.org). I appreciate your interest in faller safety and we look forward to hearing from you. 🙌

## 2021 Key Falling Department Numbers

BCFSC Falling Safety Advisors completed the following activities during the year:

- 12 Faller Certifications (5 New Faller Trainee, 6 Challenge)
- 5 Falling Supervisor Certifications
- 209 Faller Visits
- 7 Certified Falling Supervisor Quality Assurance Visits
- 36 Certified Falling Supervisor Visits
- 17 Trainer Quality Assurance Visits
- 19 Company Reviews

Any faller, Falling Supervisor, contractor or licensee who would like to receive more information on the services offered by the BCFSC falling department, can call toll-free 1-877-741-1060 and speak to a Falling Safety Advisor. 🙌

## 2022 Projects and Work Plan Initiatives

BCFSC and the Falling Technical Advisory Committee will be working on the following key projects and work plan items for 2022:

- Support for Falling Supervisors with respect to a risk-based approach to supervision and meaningful faller inspections.
- Review and update the 5-day Falling Supervisor course
- Review and implement the falling and bucking competency-based standards.
- Review and update the Certified Falling Supervisor Assessment process
- Review and update the Danger Tree Blasting course 🙌

Danielle Lifton wrote this poem as a story to read to her young kids. Her husband is a faller with Blue Thunder Contracting Ltd. in Campbell River. Another faller friend of the Lifton's suggested Danielle share it in the Forest Safety News.

Danielle remarks "Given everything that is going on, maybe it'll help lift the spirits of families effected and they can read it to their kids as well."

# A Fallers Day on the Hill

By Danielle Lifton

He's up before the birds and sun,  
Hops into the truck, the day has begun.  
The crew turns down a bumpy dirt road,  
Everyone to the helicopter - there's gear to be stowed.

With blades spinning, they take off like the morning breeze,  
All the fallers look out and survey the trees.  
With eyes on the helipad, the pilot sets down,  
Mist lifts from the mountains as his boots touch the ground.

Saw in hand, he sets out for the day to work the block,  
With his partner at a two tree lengths walk.  
Radio is on so he can pay heed,  
Of any help his fellow fallers need.

All day long he cuts and bucks,  
Soon these logs will loaded on trucks.  
To be processed and inspected with a fine-tooth comb,  
And maybe one day become a family's new home.

When the last trees of the day have fell,  
The crew heads out, bidding the hill farewell.  
He's home at last and his loved ones hold him happily,  
Thankful for another day because forestry feeds his family. 🌲

