



Weather Events and Worker Safety

British Columbia is experiencing the effects of climate change: temperatures are increasing, sea levels are rising, and variable and extreme weather is becoming more frequent. Scientists expect these changes to accelerate and intensify in the years and decades ahead. Understanding and managing these risks is necessary to protect B.C.'s workers, tenure holders and infrastructure within the forest sector.

The increased frequency and magnitude of weather events compels Woodlots and Community Forests to re-examine existing safety plans and/or develop new safety plans to address the potential for increased risks to worker safety.

Licence obligations are defined in Division 4, Section 25 of Workers Compensation Act. Specifically, as Owners, Woodlot Licensees and Community Forest Agreement holders, must provide and maintain the land and premises in a safe manner. The owner must know, control, and communicate any health and safety concerns at or near the workplace, that could result in a person being harmed by a condition or use of the workplace.

The owner must also ensure a plan is in place to address the hazards.

Further responsibilities for worker safety are also provided in the following sections of the Workers Compensation Act.

- Section 21: An employer
- Section 22: Workers
- Section 23: Supervisors
- Section 24: Prime contractor

Specific bulletins describing these responsibilities have been previously developed by the WL- CFA SC and are available on the association websites.

[Weather Related Worker Safety Issues and the Development of Safety Bulletins](#)

The Woodlot Licence and Community Forest Association Safety Committee will be developing resources to inform and support tenure holders, association members and workers to better understand and address the elevated risks associated with a changing climate and associated weather events.

The following table provides an overview of topics and overall priority

Weather Event	Priority	Topic
Locally Significant Rainfall	1	Safe work practices as it relates to significant rainfall events, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to rainfall shutdown procedures • Development of rainfall shutdown procedures • Additional management implications of significant rainfall events (e.g., post event road inspections, communication, potential contract considerations and signage)
Wind Events	2	Safe work practices as it relates to significant wind events, specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard assessment (road edges, block boundaries, partial cuts) • Safe work practices • Management options
Extreme Heat	3	Safe work practices as it relates to extreme heat as well as considerations related to the associated issues of wildfire and smoke.
Extreme Cold and Snowfall	4	Safe work practices as they relate to extreme cold and heavy snow accumulations. Bulletins will include info related to cold weather shutdown protocols and emergency warming.

These resources will be developed on a quarterly basis and made available through standard association communications channels as well the BC Forest Safety Council’s Woodlot Licence and Community Forest Association Safety Committee webpage.

Links:

[Preliminary strategic climate risk assessment - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://gov.bc.ca)

[Safety – Federation of BC Woodlot Associations](#)

[Safety Publications – British Columbia Community Forest Association \(bccfa.ca\)](http://bccfa.ca)

[Woodlot Licence and Community Forest Agreement Safety Committee \(WLCFASC\) – BC Forest Safety Council](#)