



# Falling



## New Faller Training

Back row, left to right: Trainers Juraj Seemann, Mike Davidson, John Jacobsen, and Wayne Miller. Front row, left to right: Trainees Isaak Posylek, Steven Hunka, Sheldon Quipp, and Nicholas Quipp.

The spring session of New Faller Training took place in Elk Bay from April 27 – May 29, 2023. Thank you to Ironside Contracting Ltd., specifically Gord Thompson (owner), Matt Nelson (site foreman) and the entire logging crew for supplying the timber and their ongoing support of the program. 🌲

## Documentation Updates on BCFSC Website

While working on the updates to the Falling Supervisor course, the BCFSC falling department, along with industry subject matter experts, reviewed documentation available to fallers and falling supervisors on the BCFSC website. One of the newest forms available is the Falling Safety Plan. This document is a 'one-stop-shop' for building a site safety plan for your falling operations. It includes the Emergency Response Plan, first aid site assessment, initial safety meeting, site hazard assessment, an area to document the general falling plan, visitor orientation, worker signoff and changes to the falling plan or worksite.

Please visit the [BCFSC website](#) to review all updated documentation and ensure you have the most up-to-date forms. 🌲

**Falling Safety Plan**

**Initial Safety Meeting Discussion**

Notice of Project submitted to WorkSafeBC: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A  
Note: A notice of project is required to be submitted to WorkSafeBC for all forestry operations lasting more than 5 working days.

Other activities or phases which may be present in work area: ☐ N/A  
☐ Road Construction ☐ Hauling ☐ Processing ☐ Y&L ☐ Engineering ☐ Mechanical Felling ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of other crews and equipment in work area: ☐ N/A Marked on a map: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Contact person(s), and company name(s) for other crews in work area: ☐ N/A

Contact procedures, and radio frequencies for other crews in work area: ☐ N/A

Access Trails: Hazard/RWZ: Boundary: Ribbon: Centerline: Creeks: Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Fallers have a current map: ☐ Yes ☐ No Prescription attached and reviewed: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Felling method: ☐ Hand ☐ Mechanical Harvesting Method: ☐ RW ☐ Pole chuck ☐ GY ☐ Helicopter

Bucking prescription: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental Conditions: (discuss hazards, risk levels, shutdown criteria, controls at place):  
☐ Wind ☐ Rainfall ☐ Snow ☐ Fog ☐ Slope stability ☐ Avalanche ☐ Heat ☐ Cold ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Equipment onsite: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Alternate falling means available: ☐ Machine assist ☐ No work zones ☐ Jacking ☐ Blasting ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Procedures and contact names to access alternate falling means: \_\_\_\_\_

Traffic Control: ☐ Logging road ☐ Public road ☐ Public access via trail ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Traffic control systems: ☐ Sign and flag ☐ Flagger ☐ Radio Control ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions for entering falling area: (include radio channel(s) being used)

Notes: (consider man checks, feller placement, muster point location):

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**Falling Safety Plan**

**Site Hazard Assessment**

Site Specific Hazards: All active openings must have a Hazard Assessment completed. Specific hazards may be identified on a Hazard Map. All identified hazards must have a risk rating and control in place.

**Danger Trees:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Production Pressure:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Steep Terrain: (rocky, broken ground)** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Windfall:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Stand Condition:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Roadside Construction Hazards:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Faller Locations:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Phase Integration/Concession:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Interaction:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

**Adverse Weather:** Risk Level: ☐ Low ☐ Med ☐ High  
Description & Controls: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Falling Safety Plan**

**Falling Plan and Sign Off**

General Falling Plan: Describe the activity and the planned sequence of tree work to be done. The plan should include the location of equipment and personnel in the work area. Any changes to the plan or risk levels must be documented and communicated using the Changes to Falling Plan or the Daily Falling Plan document.

Visitor Orientation:  
• Must sign in with Supervisor and be accompanied by qualified personnel while in active work areas at all times  
• Must be wearing appropriate PPE  
• Must review and sign off on the current ERP and work plan

Visitor Name	Initial	Date	Visitor Name	Initial	Date

Worker Signoff:  
• I verify that I have reviewed this site-specific work plan and understand the hand falling safe work procedures.  
• All reasonable hazards, risks and controls have been reviewed with me.

Worker Name	Initial	Date	Worker Name	Initial	Date

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**Falling Safety Plan**

**Changes to the Work Plan**

Identify new hazards and changes to the worksite. Describe details of changes and any updated controls. Take into consideration the items listed below:

- Traffic control/signage and gating
- ERP changes
- Changes to risk levels
- Radio frequency changes
- Safe working distances/bait zones
- Man-check changes
- Create visitors
- First Aid Coverage/first aid equipment/ETV relocation

**Changes to the Falling Plan or Worksite**  
Changes must be communicated to the crew and be current.

Date	Changes to the Falling Plan or Worksite

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# Seeing the Forest for the Trees

By David Adshead, BCFSC  
Falling Safety Advisor

Beautiful British Columbia is world renowned for its incredible wilderness landscape, mountains, rivers, lakes and forests. It's a great place to live, work and play.

Our forests are regionally diverse - from coastal and interior rainforests, dry belt pine and fir forest and higher elevation spruce and balsam, old growth and new growth - they all have one thing in common ... trees!

Whether working or playing, it is essential to be aware of a forest's potential hazards and what can put you at risk, specifically as it relates to the trees.

## What makes a tree hazardous?

A dangerous tree is any tree (regardless of its size) that is hazardous to people or facilities because of:

- It's location or "lean"
- Physical damage
- Overhead hazards
- Deterioration of limbs, stems or root system
- A combination of the above






Truth be told, any tree has potential to be a hazard in certain circumstances. Weather, the environment and the condition of a tree can all render it a danger tree.

Answering the age-old question "If a tree falls in the forest, does anyone hear?" ... only if someone is near enough to hear. The same applies to the danger it may pose. If no one is near it, then even if it falls, it isn't a danger to anyone. Spend enough time in a forest and you will witness a tree fall over on its own. It's a natural part of the forest's cycle.

## How do you determine if a tree is a hazard?

Use the **Recognize**, **Evaluate**, and **Control** method, commonly referred to as **REC**.

	<b>Recognize the Hazard</b>	<p>From a distance, observe as much of the stand of trees as possible, focusing on any individual trees that show signs of defect. The more time spent exposed to a potential hazard tree, a more detailed assessment is required. Remember, not all dead trees are danger trees and not all green trees are safe trees.</p>
	<b>Evaluate the Situation/ Hazard</b>	<p>Perform a 360° assessment of the tree, looking for lean and defects to determine if it is a danger. Consider the effect weather and environment have on the tree and the time spent within its danger zone. Moving through the forest means very little time spent exposed to a danger tree, however the risk would go up if the wind was blowing or if a person remained stationary for a longer period in the danger zone. Are you walking by it or pitching your tent under it?</p>
	<b>Control the Hazard</b>	<p>Determine the best ways to reduce the risk the danger trees pose. The best solution is elimination - either eliminate the hazards around you or remove yourself from around the hazards. A qualified person could fall the tree, use alternate falling methods, or create a defined no-work zone around the tree that keeps people out of the danger zone of the hazard.</p>

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For recreational users enjoying the forest, be situationally aware by keeping your head up and looking around. Pay attention to weather conditions and how they may affect the area. Hiking or walking is considered a low-risk activity when the time spent exposed to any single danger tree is minimal but the risk increases with temperature changes, rain, wind and snow, or if the stand has a high number of danger trees due to root rot, bug kill or recent fire damage.

Always keep in mind the risk goes up with extended exposure so when you stop in a forested area, take a moment to look around and spot any trees that can strike you if they fall over. Walk around them and look for defects or signs of weakness. If you identify any danger trees, relocate to a different area so you are no longer in the strike zone - at minimum 1.5 tree lengths away from the potential hazard.

In my humble opinion, working in the forest is arguably the best! Fresh air, incredible sights, sounds and ... trees! Before forestry work begins, the Worker's Compensation Act and Occupational Health & Safety Regulation require that a qualified person perform a site hazard assessment. The **REC** process should be applied to any identified hazards and information communicated to all workers prior to work commencing. In a forest environment, this includes a tree assessment to determine if any trees affecting the work area are danger trees.

Appropriate controls must be applied to reduce the risk danger trees pose to workers and, where feasible, the danger tree must be felled. Fallers need to have an appropriate plan that prioritizes the removal of an identified danger tree into an open area as soon as it is safe to do so. To overcome a falling difficulty, the plan can include using Qualified Assistance. If the tree is unsafe to fall, then alternate falling methods may be used.

### What if the danger tree can't be felled?

There may be several reasons a danger tree cannot be felled. One of the most important, is not having a qualified person available to fall the tree. A faller may assess the tree and determine whether an adequate opening is present, if the tree is controllable, or if there is an appropriate escape route. If any of these are questionable then the tree can be deemed unsafe to fall. In these instances, the only course of action is to create a defined *no-work zone* around the danger tree to keep workers out of the danger zone of the tree. A *no-work zone* has to be physically marked, typically with yellow *no-work zone* ribbon to mark the danger zone boundary. The size and shape of the *no-work zone* depends on the size and lean of the hazard, the terrain the hazard is located on, weather conditions and the surrounding timber. The hazard and *no-work zone* need to be documented, marked on the map and shared with any workers who may be affected by the danger tree hazard.



### Who can assess trees and decide if they are safe or dangerous?

The Wildlife Danger Tree Assessor course (WDTAC) provides valuable instruction on assessing dangerous trees and evaluating wildlife habitat value in forestry, (non-urban) parks and wildland fire situations. The course is recognized as the current "standard of care" (*the best available and accepted standards and practices*) in BC by the Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Environment and WorkSafeBC, this includes three modules:

1. Parks and Recreation Sites
2. Wildland Fire Safety
3. Forest Activities (e.g., harvesting, silviculture, resource roads, oil & gas)

BC forests are a vital resource and provide amazing benefits to us all. From providing renewable fibre, climate health, wildlife ecologies and a place for us to work and play, it is essential for all of us to see the forest for the trees as every tree should be appreciated and respected for what it is and the story it has to tell. If you're in the forest, look for the story, as it may just save your life.

#### Additional resources:

[Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites Training](#)

[Dangerous Tree Blasting for Certified Fallers](#)

[Wildlife Danger Tree Assessor Course](#) 