

# FOREST SAFETY

DECEMBER 2023 • Issue 4 / vol. 10

# NEWS



## Positive Progress and Distractions in Times of Uncertainty

By Rob Moonen

The only constant is change is an accurate way to describe BC's forest sector. And while change can be uncomfortable for many of us, our industry has a long and successful history of responding to change and doing it well.

In 2004, the Forest Safety Task Force, consisting of appointed Forest Industry Leaders, developed a report and action plan to eliminate deaths and serious injuries in BC's forest industry. This report set out the recommendations of the task force and an action plan that, if effectively implemented, would fundamentally change how health and safety was treated by the forest industry in BC. The task force ultimately concluded that focus cannot simply be placed on reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries in the sector. To succeed, fundamental attitudes and behaviours about safety needed to change.

Almost twenty years later, while there is still more work to do, the journey the forest industry has been engaged in has been one of dynamic and positive change. Forest sector stakeholders have demonstrated that when we work together, we can achieve our collective goal of ensuring every forestry worker goes home safe, every day. With each passing year, industry has achieved new milestones in improved safety culture and performance.

2023 has been a very challenging year with the wildfires which contributed to a number of tragic events. In 2023 year-to-date (YTD), there have been eight work-related deaths, including the four wildland firefighters who perished in a motor vehicle incident (MVI) on Highway 1 near Walhachin.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to

the families, friends and colleagues of the deceased and our sympathies to all those affected.

In times of uncertainty and tragedy, it's difficult not to get distracted from our daily work activities. The past few years have presented the forest industry with some unique challenges. From forest policy changes and uncertainty, asset closures, curtailments, permit delays, to extreme weather events.

These challenges have put additional pressure on all forestry workers and can cause high-production pressure and a rush to get the work done once workers are back on the block. As we move into the fall and winter, consider the following points to ensure that production pressures and increased activity are effectively managed to ensure safe operations:

- It is tempting to work as much and as fast as possible when work is available; however, don't take shortcuts. Although shortcuts can lead to temporary benefits, they also greatly increase the risk of a serious incident, or worse.
- After long shutdowns, the pressures to "get 'er done" can be heavy. Companies want to get roads built, timber fallen and logs to market and workers want to get a decent paycheque in the bank. Other phases that follow behind you may want you to keep working so they can keep working. When it starts blowing, snowing and raining hard, those pressures can influence decisions around weather-related shutdowns that should be based on worker safety. It is important to maintain your shutdown criteria. Money problems can be very real but are not worth risking your safety or the safety of your fellow workers.

Welcome to the Winter edition of Forest Safety News, covering news about safety topics in forestry. This is YOUR safety newsletter. We look forward to your input and feedback! Email the editor at [editor@bcforestsafesafe.org](mailto:editor@bcforestsafesafe.org) or call 1-877-741-1060.

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- Increased pressure and additional work can be physically and mentally tiring. Monitor yourself and others around you for signs of fatigue. Be self-aware and think critically about the decisions you are making. Stress and fatigue can lead to poor decision making, potentially leading to safety issues. Be aware and adjust your work as required.
- Stress and uncertainty can also cause mental health concerns. People can turn to drugs and alcohol to help cope or self-medicate. Be aware and have tools and resources available to help you and your workers deal with these issues before they become bigger problems. There are resources available on [BCFSC's Mental Health Resource Page](#).
- Work with your team of workers, suppliers, subcontractors and clients. Communicate the challenges you face so they are aware and use their knowledge and experience to come up with potential solutions. This may alleviate some of the pressure and help to focus on safe operations.

As an industry, we've demonstrated that when we work together, we can accomplish great things. Let's ensure that we continue to focus on what's in our control to meet our collective goal of **ensuring every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.** 🌲



## What's New

Here is the latest on what we have to offer since September 2023. Find direct links to safety alerts, industry-specific resources, industry information and more to download and/or share with employees, industry and safety peers. And make sure to follow us on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest news. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

**Online Training for Forest Supervisors** – BCFSC has six NEW, free, online Forest Supervisor training courses available for current and future harvesting and silviculture Forest Supervisors.

**WorkSafeBC First Aid Amendment Update** – To assist organizations in preparing for the proposed requirements, WorkSafeBC has added further guidance to the background on the occupational first aid regulatory changes coming into effect November 1, 2024.

**Video: Human Factors Workshop: Systems Approach to Preventing Struck by Incidents** – Learn more about preventing incidents between mobile equipment and workers on foot.

**Training Calendar** – Our 2023-2024 Training Calendar is now fully loaded and offers both in-classroom and online courses. We also provide requested training bringing courses directly to your preferred location at a convenient time that works for you.



**Safety Alerts** – Alerts provide timely information on incidents and issues which cause, or result in, serious or fatal injuries and are intended to raise awareness and educate industry so we can learn from each other's experience and effort. Here are the latest alerts from BCFSC and industry.

- **BCFSC Safety Alert of the Month** – Flying Safely Over Water
- **Industry Alert** – UTV Shock Mount Failure
- **Manufacturing Weekly Safety Alert** – Click on the link to see the latest weekly alert

**To subscribe to our Safety Alert emails – [Click Here](#)**

## Upcoming Industry Conferences

**BC Natural Resources Forum** – January 16 – 18, 2024 in Prince George BC. For more information or to register, visit the website.

**79th Annual Truck Loggers Association (TLA) Convention** – January 17-19, 2024 in Vancouver, BC. For more information or to register, visit the website.

**Western Forestry Contractors Association Conference & Trade Show** – January 31 - February 2, 2024 in Victoria, BC. For more information or to register, visit the website.

**Forest Professionals of BC 2024 Conference & AGM** – February 8 – 10, 2024 in Kelowna, BC. For more information or to register, visit the website.

## Industry Links

**Shift Into Winter** – winter is here. Make sure you know what your responsibilities are as an employer and employee when it comes to driving in winter road conditions.



*Happy Holidays*  
**BC Forest Safety**

Extending you our very best for a **safe, healthy and happy holiday season.**

**BCFSC Holiday Office Hours**

Monday, Dec 25	CLOSED
Tuesday, Dec 26	CLOSED
Wednesday, Dec 27	8am – 4:30pm
Thursday, Dec 28	8am – 4:30pm
Friday, Dec 29	8am – 4:30pm
Monday, Jan 1	CLOSED
Tuesday, Jan 2	Regular hours resume

**Road Safety at Work** – visit Road Safety at Work for resources, webinars, workshops and news relating to road safety for you and your employees.

**WorkSafeBC Announcements** – check here for the latest information on WorkSafeBC policy and regulation updates, resource development, risk advisories and more.

**WorkSafeBC Enews** – subscribe to Insight; WorkSafeBC's policy, regulation and research division e-Newsletter, Health and Safety Enews, Young Worker Enews and more.

**WorkSafe Magazine** – WorkSafeBC publishes *WorkSafe Magazine* six times a year to inform, inspire and provide practical tips on a range of topical occupational health and safety matters. It's free to **subscribe** and available online. 📄

# 2024 BC Forestry Conferences & Events

Start planning for 2024 and register for these upcoming forestry-related conferences. 📅

Conference / Event	Dates	Location	Information & Registration
21st Annual BC Natural Resources Forum	Jan. 16 - 18	Prince George, BC	<a href="http://www.bcnaturalresourcesforum.com">www.bcnaturalresourcesforum.com</a>
79th Annual Truck Loggers Association (TLA) Convention	Jan. 17 - 19	Vancouver, BC	<a href="http://www.tla.ca">www.tla.ca</a>
2024 Western Forestry Contractors Association Conference & Trade Show	Jan. 31 - Feb 2	Victoria, BC	<a href="http://www.wfca.ca">www.wfca.ca</a>
2024 Forest Professionals of BC Conference & AGM	Feb 8 – 10	Kelowna, BC	<a href="https://evoque.swoogo.com/FPBC2024">https://evoque.swoogo.com/FPBC2024</a>
2024 Council of Forest Industries (COFI) Convention	Apr. 10 - 12	Vancouver, BC	<a href="http://www.cofi.org">www.cofi.org</a>
8th Annual Indigenous Resource	Apr. 24 - 26	Nanaimo, BC	<a href="http://www.bciroc.ca">www.bciroc.ca</a>
2024 Interior Logging (ILA) Conference and AGM	May 9 - 11	Kamloops, BC	<a href="http://www.interiorlogging.org">www.interiorlogging.org</a>
2024 Interior Safety Conference	May 10	Kamloops, BC	<a href="http://www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/">www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/</a>
2024 Vancouver Island Safety Conference	Oct 26	Nanaimo, BC	<a href="http://www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/">www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/</a>

## BCFSC to Establish a Special Industry Operating Fund to Support Research and Development

BCFSC is committed to fostering a culture of safety and innovation in the forest industry. As part of its 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, the BCFSC will launch a Research, Development and Opportunity Fund to support initiatives that address current and emerging safety challenges and opportunities in the forest sector. This fund will provide financial assistance to industry researchers and partners who propose practical and feasible solutions for improving occupational health and safety in forestry operations. It will also encourage collaboration

and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, as well as alignment with OHS regulations.

The funding will support projects that involve developing, testing, evaluating, or implementing new or improved products, processes, technologies, and best practices that enhance safety in the forest industry. Some examples of potential research topics include personal protective equipment (PPE) or improved safety designs; technological advancement studies and prototype designs; analytical studies and concept

validation; field studies and efficacy or safety trials; and best practices and guidelines for safe work procedures.

BCFSC will be accepting applications for research grants in 2024. BCFSC will prioritize approvals based on the significance of the emerging issue and proposed research projects that demonstrate innovation, impact, feasibility and scalability. Visit our website for updated information on the application process. 📄



# Workforce Development Funding Programs to Support Skills Training

WorkBC has two workforce development programs that offer funding opportunities to help build skills training intended to overcome employment barriers and workforce shortages.

**The Community Workforce Response Grant (CWRG)** provides funding to communities and sectors province-wide to help address immediate and emerging labor market needs through targeted skills training projects.

The funding focuses on sectors for cohort-based, short-term (less than 52 weeks) projects and fully funds training costs up to \$10,000 per participant as well as services and support to help participants overcome training and employment barriers. Visit the [Workforce Shortages Stream Criteria](#) for eligibility requirements.

**The BC Employer Training Grant (ETG)** provides funding to small, medium and large enterprises to support skills training for workers including prospective new hires. The

program is intended to help British Columbians access the skills training required to adapt to the labour market's changing job requirements, while also encouraging employer involvement in skills training. The ETG helps employers pay for training, that provides workers with increased job security and growth opportunities. Employers can receive 80% of the cost of training up to \$10,000 per employee, with a maximum annual amount per employer of \$300,000. For more details, see the [Eligibility Criteria](#) on the WorkBC website. 🌱

## Forestry Professionals Gain Valuable Safety Insights at the 2023 Vancouver Island Conference

The 2023 Vancouver Island Safety Conference was held on Saturday, October 28th in Nanaimo, BC. More than 290 forestry professionals from different sectors attended the free, full-day event with the theme of “Navigating the Future During Complex Times”.

The conference featured three keynote speakers, two of whom shared their stories and insights from Africa and one on the federal and provincial prison system. Allan Moore, a seasoned environment, health and safety expert, told us how he survived being charged by elephants in Africa and what it taught him about safety leadership styles. Dr. Alison Granger-Brown, a former prison therapist, explained how our body and brain react to stress and how we can listen to our intuition and signals to stay safe. Steve Donahue, a bestselling author and motivational speaker, entertained us with his adventures in the Sahara Desert and how he learned to not only embrace change but to invest in it.

The conference also included presentations from Roger Harris, who discussed the evolution of the safety mindset in forestry and encouraged us all to celebrate our successes and not dwell on the statistics; Joe Scibilia, from ZoneSafe, introduced some new technologies for mobile equipment / pedestrian interface safety; and Tim Stinson of Stinson Aerial, who demonstrated the use and regulation of drones in forestry.

On behalf of the VISC Steering Committee, we would like to thank all the volunteers and sponsors who made this free conference and networking event possible. For more details on the presentations, read the VISC 2023 Wrap-up that will be available on December 15, 2023. 🌱



# BCFSC Celebrates Leadership in Forestry Safety with the 2023 Leadership in Safety Awards

The 2023 Leadership in Safety Awards were presented at the Vancouver Island Safety Conference on Saturday, October 28, 2023. The awards celebrate safety achievements in the forest industry by recognizing individuals for their contributions and their outstanding commitment in supporting safety in the workplace. Nominations are invited from anyone in the industry who knows someone – an individual, crew, contractor, company, supplier, consultant, etc. – who deserves to be recognized for their outstanding safety achievements. Someone who has made, or continues to make, a difference in supporting our shared goal to see every worker return home safely at the end of the day.

This year's awards were presented to three well-deserved individuals who have shown outstanding commitment to forestry safety throughout the course of their careers.

The 2023 Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award for Commitment to Safety Excellence was presented to Roger Harris, the BC Forest Safety Ombudsperson who will be retiring from his position at the end of 2023. The Most Valuable Player Award in Forestry was presented to Mercer Forestry's safety advocate, Sandy Higgins and Patrick McDonald from Canfor's Kootenay operations received the Most Valuable Player Award for Wood Products Manufacturing.

## ROGER HARRIS - 2023 Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award Forest Safety

Roger Harris has served as the BC Forest Safety Ombudsperson for 17 years. In this role, he was responsible for investigating safety concerns and providing recommendations for improvement to industry stakeholders, including employers, workers and regulatory bodies. Roger's extensive experience in forestry, gave him a 360-degree view and an objective perspective of BC forestry with a full understanding of the inherent safety and operational risks that both workers and employers face.

During his tenure as BC Forest Safety Ombudsperson, Roger produced in-depth reports on key safety issues relating to forestry safety, including Phase Integration, SAFE Companies, Recruitment, Training and Certification for Worker Safety, Resource Road Safety and more. Roger will be retiring from this role in December 2023.

## SANDRA HIGGINS - 2023 MVP Award Harvesting

Sandy's lifelong career in forestry began when logging operations were mostly manual, and the industry was extremely high risk. She has shared stories when it was considered normal to take immense risks just to bring home a paycheck, when the motto was "in for the money, out for

your life". When the BC Forest Safety Council introduced the SAFE Companies program and industry started to see a shift in safety culture, Sandy witnessed the cultural shift first-hand. She knew from experience it was not going to be without its challenges, yet at the same time, it was the best part of her career.

Sandy is the Safety Coordinator at Mercer Forestry Services located in Lumby, BC. Her industry experience and her commitment to safety are at the core of Mercer's "Safety First" forestry operations. Sandy firmly believes in this number one value and personally holds safety to the highest standard by leading by example. She is well respected among staff, customers and industry and she clearly and consistently demonstrates strong safety leadership in the organization.

## PATRICK McDONALD - 2023 MVP Award Wood Products Manufacturing

Patrick McDonald has over 15 years of experience working as a safety professional in Canada. He is considered an innovator and leader in wood products manufacturing safety in BC and specializes in developing worker and operational safety solutions. Time and time again, Patrick has demonstrated his forward-thinking creativity in various projects including his most recent hand-safety initiative that focusses on the prevention of hand injuries. For this project, he collaborated with a leading glove supplier to design and implement gloves that are task-specific to wood products manufacturing and shared the project outcome with the BC sawmill industry and across Canada through the cross-country safety share with Workplace Safety North (Ontario).

To learn more about BCFSC's Leadership in Safety Awards, visit the [BCFSC website](#). 📄



## BC First Nations Forestry Council's Opportunity Register

The Opportunity Register (OR) being developed by the BC First Nations Forestry Council is an online tool to support individual First Nations pursuing opportunities in the forestry sector. The tool aims to create strategic connections between Nations, industry, government, and funding sources, to support successful business partnerships by identifying, connecting, supporting, and tracking First Nation's interests in the forestry sector.

The platform will improve assurance, efficiency and effectiveness of registered opportunities. First Nations wishing to use the OR will be able to log onto a system and register their forest sector related opportunities. Relevant information related to the opportunity will be requested (to allow for faster progression of the opportunity registered).

Once the tool is up and running, the goal will be focused on matching each

First Nation opportunity with relevant businesses, SMEs, and/or financial providers.

In addition, forest sector related business, subject matter experts (SMEs) and/or funding resources looking to partner with or support First Nations in their opportunities will also take part in adding their relevant opportunities the register.

For more information on the Opportunity Register, contact [robert@forestrycouncil.ca](mailto:robert@forestrycouncil.ca) or [fill out the short questionnaire](#). 📄

## WorkSafeBC Reminder: Workplace Health and Safety Requirements Come into Effect in 2024

Effective January 1, 2024, Return to Work Obligations: Duty to Cooperate and Duty to Maintain Employment will come into effect. The provincial government has made amendments to the Workers Compensation Act Bill 41: Amendments to the Workers Compensation Act that affect return to work policies.

### What the new legislation means for employers and workers

The duty to cooperate applies to both workers and employers, and to claims with injury dates going back up to two years.

- Employers will be required to make suitable work available to workers in a timely and safe manner following their injury or illness. They will also be required to make necessary changes to accommodate a worker's abilities to perform new or modified duties.
- Workers will be required to cooperate with their employer to identify suitable modified job duties and not unreasonably refuse that work when it's made available to them.

The **duty to maintain employment** applies only to some employers and to claims with injury dates going back up to six months. If an employer regularly employs 20 or more

workers and has employed a worker for at least one year prior to their injury, they will have an obligation to maintain that worker's employment.

### Return to work benefits both employers and workers

Supporting workers in their recovery at work following an injury is good for both workers and employers. By helping them stay on the job as they recover, employers retain skilled workers and reduce both their recruitment and training costs.

For workers, being able to perform some duties while they recover keeps them connected with their workplace, co-workers, and regular routines, and can prevent long-lasting disability.

To learn more about how you can help your workers return to work safely and the duty to cooperate and maintain employment visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#).

### WorkSafeBC Update to First Aid Regulations

WorkSafeBC's amendments to Part 3 of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation, relating to first aid take effect November 1, 2024.

To assist in preparing for the proposed requirements, WorkSafeBC has added further guidance to the backgrounder on the occupational first aid regulatory changes.

The updates include information relating to:

1. Guidance on "less-accessible" workplaces
2. Alignment with the CSA standards
3. Emergency transportation

For detailed information, see [Backgrounder: Occupational first aid regulatory changes on the WorkSafeBC website](#).

**Hand Hygiene: How to Reduce the Spread of Germs** - WorkSafeBC has released a new video on how to sanitize your hands to help maintain good hand hygiene.

**Slips, Trips and Falls are BC's Costliest Workplace Incidents** - Each year, approximately 20% of workplace injuries are related to slips, trips, and falls. In the past six years, almost 41,000 workers in BC suffered slip-trip-and-fall injuries, including fractures, sprains, and dislocations. During the winter months, icy and wet conditions contribute to an 11% increase in injuries due to slips, trips, and falls.

On average, slip-trip-and-fall injuries cost BC businesses 440,000 lost workdays and more than \$148 million in claim costs each year.

[Read more](#) from WorkSafeBC on how you can help manage the risk of slips, trips and falls in your workplace. 📄