



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

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Winter Wildfire Hazards

AOM: 2023-11-21

Many parts of BC are experiencing severe drought conditions and impacts from a catastrophic fire season. In particular, the north-east part of the province remains under Level 5 drought conditions. This area experienced several very large wildfires, including the 619,000 ha Donnie Creek fire.

This winter, some wildfires will continue to smolder and burn under the snow, which will create new and hidden hazards, some of which may not be obvious or will be unfamiliar to some field workers. Fire reclamation work and salvage operations being conducted within or beside these burnt areas will expose workers to hazards such as dangerous trees, ash pits and smoke.

Winter Wildfire Safety Tips

- Due to smoldering fires, the root systems and stems of trees will continue to weaken throughout the winter. The added weight of snow will increase the risk of these trees falling unexpectedly.
- Burnt or damaged tree root systems will be difficult to see under the snow. These trees may fall even if no wind is present.
- Ash pits or fires hidden under the snow are a significant hazard for field workers who walk through these burnt areas.
- Smoldering fires will produce smoke that may linger on site, making breathing difficult. Smoke may also impair visibility and cause distraction.
- Vigilance and good communication are required to work safely under these conditions. Increase your safety discussions and training on the topics of dangerous trees, wildfire hazards and refusing unsafe work.
- Communicate with members of the public and other industries about these new conditions and hazards to raise awareness and improve the safety of everyone out in the forest.





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Resources

- [BC Drought Information Portal](#)
- [Online Training – Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites](#)
- [Hazard Tree – Situational Awareness Safety Alert](#)
- [Snag Safety Alert](#)



BCFSC Latest News & Resources

[Online Training for Forest Supervisors](#) – There are six online Forest Supervisor training courses that are available for free. [Check out this website to learn more.](#)

[December 2023 - Forest Safety Newsletter](#) – Read the latest issue of the BCFSC FSN. Download a copy or read it online.

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

[Operator Safety Training Fact Sheet](#) – The Wood Pellets Association of Canada (WPAC) and BCFSC have launched an industry-wide initiative that delivers a comprehensive digital e-learning safety training program for plant operators and supervisors across companies. Learn more by reading the Fact Sheet.

BCFSC Training:

Upcoming Classroom Training

The 2024 training calendar is now available. Refer to the [Training section of our website](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.



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Worker Assessment and Training

Each forestry occupation requires different knowledge and skillsets to perform the job at hand. BCFSC worked with industry to develop competency-based standards, training, and assessment tools to help employers evaluate workers and complete on-the-job training.

Check out our [FREE online training and assessment forms](#) for Basic Forest Workers, Yarding, Mechanized Harvesting and Road Building.

Prepared by Gerard Messier RPF, CRSP

