

Falling Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC) Update

Dangerous Trees Presentation

At the March 14th FTAC Meeting, Dean McGeough, RPF and member of the Wildlife/Dangerous Tree Committee of BC, gave a presentation on dangerous trees. Topics covered during the presentation included:

- Introduction to Wildlife Dangerous
 Tree Assessor Course modules
- What is a dangerous tree?
- Risks of the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Course program
- Mechanical operations and the Danger Tree Assessment process
- What is the dangerous tree assessment process
- Structurally damaged stands
- Site assessment overview
- Worksite perimeter assessments
- Why assess to keep a tree?
- High stem density worksites
- Examples of suspect tree trends
- Safety decisions and documentation



The Wildfire Dangerous Tree Assessor Certificate Program (WDTAC) is two-day course consisting of both classroom and field. There are three different modules available depending on the type of work you are doing: Forest Activities, Parks, Recreation Sites & Trails, and Wildland Fire Safety. Dean identified that becoming a Certified Danger Tree Assessor does not necessarily mean that you are qualified. Qualification will come with experience, overtime.

A dangerous tree is described as a tree that is hazardous to a worker due to its location or lean, its physical damage, overhead conditions, deterioration of its limbs, stem or root system, or any combination. In the WDTAC, a dangerous tree is defined by the Level of Disturbance Hazard Tables.

Dean identified some risks associated with the application of the WDTAC such as what if the assessment process is not embraced at the workplace; assumption that all hazards were controlled; assessment techniques may not be correct; individual may revert back to the way they have always done things and not follow what was taught in the course; time changes the forest landscape; tree was marked to retain and it was assumed that it was assessed; and what has been left for the next phase.

He also discussed the reasons why you would assess keeping a tree. The reasons could be that the tree is not dangerous, it has a small hazard, it may be a Culturally Modified Tree, it may be a protected wildlife tree and/or it may be a special tree. An assessment needs to occur in order to make that determination!

For more information, visit the <u>Wildlife</u> <u>Dangerous Tree Assessor Certificate</u> <u>Program webpage</u> on the University of Norther British Columbia's website.

Emergency Response Planning Insights Presentation

Also, at the March 14th FTAC Meeting, Pierre Gagnon, a hoist operator and instructor since 2007 with experience with the BC Wildfire Service, SARs, utility operations, emergency management crisis in Canada, the USA, Turkey, and Australia, presented on helicopter hoisting and Class D Fixed Line (CDFL) systems, focusing on how to get an injured worker from the injury site to the roadside.



The presentation focused on four topics:

- Common terms for Human External Cargo (HEC) and Class D Operations
- Helicopter hoisting operations and application
- Helicopter CDFL operations and applications
- How these operations can be effectively integrated into forestry operations

As per the Canadian Aviation Regulation, Class D human external cargo (HEC) operations are when people are transported outside of a helicopter. This can include transporting people above or below the landing gear. (CARs 722.21).

Helicopter hoisting operations are currently used by law enforcement, the US Coast Guard, the military, utility worker placement, industrial rescue and worker safety and Search and Rescue. It is also used for wildfire response, emergency management and rescue. Components that are required for a helicopter hoisting operations are an approved pilot, a hoist operator, a "down the line" operator(s), an approved Personnel

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Carrying Devices (PCDs), and a hoist equipped helicopter. A company's hoisting program must be approved by Transport Canada through the company operations manual before any hoisting takes place.

Pierre discussed 4 pros for helicopter hoisting operations:

- Patient is carried internally without having to land immediately after the operation – direct flight to advanced level of care.
- 2. In adverse weather, there is no longline therefore the helicopter can fly low level in case of fog or limited visibility.
- 3. There is another aircrew (hoist operator) with the pilot to perform risk assessment and monitor risks during the operation.
- In the event of an aircraft emergency, the Flight Manual Supplement remains the same procedure.

The cons of helicopter hoisting operations:

- 1. Capital investment for helicopter operator is significant.
- 2. Maintenance costs, which are often passed onto the customer.
- 3. Currently there are limited resources in BC (less than 25).

Class D Fixed Line (CDFL) operations are used for utility rescues, utility work methods, Emergency Response Plan and rescue, and Search and Rescue. The pros of CDFL operations:

- 1. They are much less cost prohibitive than hoisting.
- 2. Kits can be transferred from helicopter to helicopter.
- 3. Training workers for CDFL operations is simpler than hoisting.
- 4. They are much more robust.

The cons that exist with CDFL are:

- 1. It is still a significant investment by forestry standards.
- 2. The staging area setup can be time consuming before the operation can take place.
- 3. Rescuers are exposed longer to the risk of flying on a longline, below the aircraft.
- In the event of an aircraft emergency, the first thing is to "drop the line".

In the next couple of years, it is anticipated that the forest industry is going to be more reliant on helicopter assistance due to changes to First Aid regulation, specifically working in remote areas and less accessible work sites.

The BCFSC has engaged Pierre to research training and equipment options for Class D Fixed Line operations in British Columbia for the forest industry, including other rural and remote industries. Once the report is complete, it will be shared with the BCFSC Advisory Groups and Committees. (

New Faller Training

The spring session of BCFSC's New Faller Training took place from March 27 – April 28, 2025, with four candidates completing the course. Thank you to Andrew Kenyon from Mosaic Forest Management and Island Pacific Logging Ltd. for providing the timber site for this course.

Back row left to right: Trainers Jake Vandort, Wade Schalm, Wayne Miller and John Jacobsen.

Front row left to right: Trainees Julian Fleming, Ben Fisher, Finn Segal and Max Fairclough.

