



FTAC Meeting Updates

How WorkSafeBC Responds to a Faller Fatality

At the June meeting of the Falling Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC), WorkSafeBC's Occupational Safety Officers Chris Miller and Kevin Legros shared how the agency responds when a tree faller is fatally injured on the job.

When a fatal incident is reported, WorkSafeBC immediately dispatches a Prevention Field Services (PFS) officer and members of its Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Investigations team. In most cases, a local PFS officer is first on site, while OHS Investigations officers may need to travel from elsewhere in the province.

Initial response

Before WorkSafeBC officers can begin their work, the scene must be released by the RCMP and the BC Coroners Service. Once that happens, the PFS officer secures the scene and begins a compliance inspection to identify any immediate hazards. A stop-work order is typically placed on all falling activities and remains in effect until all serious safety concerns have been addressed by the employer(s).

Early in the inspection, PFS officers will identify all parties involved, such as the licensee, prime contractor, subcontractors, supervisors, and workers, and clarify their roles leading up to the incident. The officer focuses on:

- How the faller came to be in the situation that led to the fatality
- Whether a compliant safety plan was in place and followed
- Any gaps in supervision or execution of the work

Officers will usually interview individuals from the different parties involved, review site-specific documentation, and assess the immediate work area for potential patterns or issues in the work processes.

The employer(s) will also be reminded of their responsibility to conduct a

preliminary and final investigation of the incident. Before any work can resume, the PFS officer will confirm that all necessary corrective actions have been implemented and are in compliance.

Both PFS and OHS Investigations officers also coordinate with other agencies on-site and offer support to affected workers, including access to WorkSafeBC's Critical Incident Response Program. This free, confidential service connects workers and employers with trained mental health professionals located in their community.

WorkSafeBC Investigations

In parallel, OHS Investigations officers conduct an in-depth investigation of the incident with the purpose of identifying and understanding the occupational health and safety factors that contributed to the incident, so that similar incidents can be prevented in the future. The amount of time an investigation takes is directly related to its complexity.

When the investigation is complete, the investigating officers prepare an Incident Investigation Report. The investigation report may include enforcement action taken under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation in response to the incident and as a result of the investigation. Regulatory compliance activities may be summarized in the report.

Miller and Legros emphasized that strong, hands-on supervision plays a vital role in preventing serious incidents, especially in high-risk activities like manual tree falling.

For more information about incident investigations and the importance of effective supervision in forestry operations, visit worksafebc.com.

Social Media

Social media provides connections and allows us to access and share information. More and more, fallers are posting videos of themselves falling trees. More and more of those videos show fallers using extremely dangerous

practices and, in some cases, committing high risk violations. Unfortunately, they are not posting videos to raise safety concerns and awareness; it is more for likes!

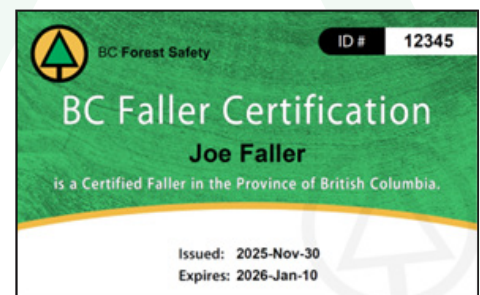
Landowners, licensees, contractors and WorkSafeBC take these posts seriously. In some instances, the licensee has banned fallers from working on the land. WorkSafeBC is starting to take note of these posts/videos and when a faller is identified, they are not only reaching out to the faller, but also to the licensee and the contractor to identify the dangerous work practices.

There is an article on Social Media Safety for Forestry Operations in the Training Section of this newsletter. The article provides some great information on building a social media policy for your company, training to understand what is appropriate to post online and considerations for using social media at the worksite.

If you have any concerns with a falling-related social media post that you have recently viewed, please feel free to share it with us at faller@bcforestsafesafe.org. 📧

Faller Certification Card Renewals

In November, the BCFSC will begin to mail out three-year faller cards to those with cards expiring in January 2026. Throughout the year, we will continue to mail out cards to all those with a 2026 expiry date.



If you do not receive your card or have not received it in the past, require a replacement card, or require an address update, contact the Falling Department at faller@bcforestsafesafe.org or 1-877-741-1060. 📧

Danger Tree Blasting Committee

Danger tree blasting allows fallers to work safely and effectively with explosives to remove trees that are too dangerous to fall by conventional methods. Currently, danger tree blasting activities are in decline within the province. Given this, Industry members established the Danger Tree Blasting Committee in 2021 to look at initiatives that would result in danger tree blasting being an easy to access, efficient, and effective tool to reduce the risk to both hand fallers and other forestry workers working on Coastal operations. Most recently, the committee's focus has been on the changes to Natural Resource Canada (NRCAN) regulation with regards to Type 6 magazines and storage requirements as well as barriers to certification and recertification.

Type 6 magazines, also called a bin, box, or day-box, is a steel magazine used for storage of smaller amounts of explosives. These magazines will not be permitted after July 31, 2026, except for law enforcement agencies, for perforating sites where they are located inside a gun loading facility, or for in-process storage of explosives. Type 9 magazines have been identified as the most cost effective to replace the Type 6 magazines, however the regulatory requirements around storage of the explosives are still somewhat cost prohibitive.

WorkSafeBC released the updated [British Columbia Blasters' Handbook](#) in March 2023. The handbook was



Type 6 Magazine

developed as a study guide for those who wish to be examined for blasting certification. The certification and recertification (renewal) requirements for blasters can be found in the [WorkSafeBC Blasting Exam Package](#). Some of the high-level requirements are provided below but can be found in more detail in the package.

To qualify for the blasting examination, the following prerequisites are required:

- At least 6 months' experience in blasting operations
- Worked as an assistant to a blaster that has held a certificate for a minimum of two years and has not had a suspension within the last two years
- Character, knowledge, qualifications, and experience make the candidate competent to handle explosives (the package provides significant detail of what should be included in a letter of experience)



Type 9 Magazine

- Taken a minimum of 8 hours of training relating to the safe handling of explosives

For **initial certification**, 2 blast logs per month for a total of 12 logs are required. Initial or new blasting certifications are issued for a period of two years.

For **renewals**, 2 blast logs per year up to 10 blasts are required. Renewal blasting certifications are issued for a period of up to five years.

There are currently less than 10 certified danger tree blasters in BC. The committee has discussed the possible reasons for the decline in certifications and determined that it may be due to the regulatory requirements around explosives storage and/or the certification and renewal requirement established by WorkSafeBC. The committee will continue to work on resolutions to these issues with the hopes of truly making danger tree blasting an easy to access, efficient, and effective tool for the forest industry. 🌲

It is with great sadness that FTAC announces the passing of one of its members, Richard Butler. Richard passed away on July 27, 2025. He was a long-time FTAC member, starting with the committee in 2009. His contributions at FTAC and in industry over the years have made a lasting impact, including his advocacy of new faller training, faller certification and falling supervisor certification. He will truly be missed.

At Richard's request, there will be no service. A private family celebration of life is planned.

We extend our deepest condolences to Richard's family and friends during this difficult time. 🌲

