

FOREST SAFETY NEWS

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NEWS

A Difficult Year: Six Lives Lost in Forestry – A Call to Recommit to Safety

As we pass the halfway mark of 2025, BC's forestry industry is facing a sobering reality: six workers have lost their lives on the job. These tragedies are a stark reminder that while we have strong safety systems in place, we must never become complacent.

Each of these incidents was unique in its circumstances, but they all share one heartbreaking truth: they were preventable.



Lives Lost, Lessons to Learn

- January 17 – Quesnel: A contracted worker died while performing maintenance at a wood products mill. This was the first manufacturing-related fatality of the year and highlights the need for rigorous hazard assessments and coordination between contractors and prime contractors.
- February 24 – Vancouver Island: A worker succumbed to injuries from a fall during deck construction. Falls remain one of the most common—and underestimated—hazards in forestry. Even a 10-foot drop can be fatal in challenging terrain.
- April 15 – South of Kitimat: A hand faller was fatally injured. Falling trees continue to be one of the most dangerous jobs in forestry, especially when overhead hazards and escape routes are not properly managed.
- June 4 – Vancouver Island: An equipment operator drowned after their machine fell into the ocean. This incident underscores the importance of emergency preparedness and equipment inspections when working near water.
- June 19 – Central Coast: A tree climber died while working in a remote area. Tree climbing is inherently high-risk and demands strict adherence to safety protocols, equipment checks, and emergency planning—especially in isolated locations.
- July 10 – Near Powell River: A worker was caught between rolling logs and heavy equipment. This fourth harvesting fatality of the year reminds us of the dangers of crush points and the need for clearly defined safe zones especially in logging operations.

Welcome to the Fall 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 or call 1-877-741-1060.

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We Can—and Must—Do Better

These six fatalities are not just statistics. They were people—colleagues, friends, family members—who went to work and never came home. And while investigations are ongoing, one thing is already clear: we must double down on our commitment to safety.

We have the tools. We have the training. We have the systems. But they only work if we use them—every day, on every site, with every task.

What Can We Do Right Now?

- **Reinforce the Basics:** Hazard assessments, safety orientations and emergency response plans must be more than paperwork—they must be practiced on the job, every minute of every day.
- **Ask “What If?”:** Encourage workers to think about potential chain reactions and worst-case scenarios and work towards reducing the risks of serious incidents occurring by following safe work procedures.

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Harvesting Safety



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- **Respect the Environment:** Steep terrain, water, weather and gravity are powerful forces. Plan accordingly and practice emergency response drills often to ensure everyone understands their roles should an incident occur.
- **Support Each Other:** Safety is a shared responsibility. Speak up, look out for one another and never cut corners. Make sure you follow safe procedures diligently. This goes for young workers AND for seasoned veterans. Complacency is just as dangerous as not knowing what to do.

A Shared Responsibility

The loss of six lives is not acceptable. As an industry, we must treat this as a wake-up call. Let's honour those we've lost by making sure we do everything in our power to prevent further tragedies.

Let's recommit to safety—not just in policy, but in practice.

BCFSC Resources:

Use these available resources from the BCFSC to help reinforce safety practices. These resources are designed to support supervisors, crews and safety coordinators in building safer workplaces and help us meet our vision where every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.

[Contractor Management – Wood Products Manufacturing Supervisor](#)

[Identifying Hazards and Assessing Risk – Wood Products Manufacturing](#)

[Slips, Trips, and Falls Injury Prevention](#)

[Emergency Response Planning](#)

[Complacency Safety Alert](#)

[Complacency Crew Talk](#) 🎧

What's New

Here is the latest on what we have to offer since June 2025. 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](#).

Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) – REGISTER TODAY.

[Register](#) for the Vancouver Island Safety Conference Coming Saturday, November 1, 2025. This free, one-day event is a must attend to anyone working in BC's forest industry—from silviculture and harvesting to wood products manufacturing. This Year's Theme: *Facing the Future Together – The Human Side of Safety*. Take a look at the [agenda](#) and see what the day has in store.

Nominate a Safety Leader –

Each year, the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) shines a spotlight on the people and companies who go above and beyond to make forestry operations safer for everyone. The **BCFSC Leadership in Safety Awards** are more than just recognition—they're a celebration of the commitment, innovation and leadership that help shape a stronger safety culture across BC's Forest industry. Nominate someone today – [visit our webpage](#) to learn more.

EXTE COM90 Automated Log Load System Report

– The BC Load Securement Working group (a subcommittee of the Log Truck Technical Advisory Committee) initiated a project back in 2021 to evaluate Exte's Com90 automated load securement system's suitability for eliminating load securement related injuries in BC log hauling operations. Read [the full report](#) on the outcomes of the study.

Safety Byte Video Series – BCFSC recently released two, short, 60 second videos relating to [Load Securement](#) [Safety for ORVs](#) and [Loading and Unloading ORV's Safely](#). Watch these, and many more safety videos on the BCFSC YouTube Channel.

BCFSC FIRS (Forest Industry Reporting System) App Dashboard

– Access the FIRS Dashboard to help you organize your records and create easy-to-read, visual reports that support better decision-making and continuous safety improvement. The more reports your company records using FIRS, the more robust and insightful your dashboard becomes.

Do you have an audit due this November? Use the FIRS App to manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies Audit submissions.

2025 Fall / Winter Training Calendar

– BCFSC's in-person training calendar is fully loaded on the BCSFC website. If there's something you see that you might want delivered directly to your organization, we can help. [Contact the training department](#) to inquire about bringing courses directly to your preferred location at a convenient time that works for you.

Share Your Manufacturing Safety Innovations

– Manufacturing Safety Innovations play a vital role in keeping workplaces safe—and sharing those ideas can make a real difference across the industry. BCFSC is looking to highlight manufacturing safety innovations through eblasts, social media, and the BCFSC website to inspire safer practices on the job.

If you've developed or come across a safety innovation that others could benefit from, we'd love to hear about it! **Submit your idea** by emailing Bill Laturnus at blaturnus@bcforestsafesafe.org.

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Safety Alerts – Alerts provide timely information on incidents and issues which cause, or result in, serious or fatal injuries. The alerts we send by email and post on our website 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**
– Click on the link to see the latest monthly safety alert from BCFSC
- **Industry Alert** – Click on the link to see the latest industry provided safety alerts
- **Manufacturing Weekly Safety Alert**
– Click on the link to see the latest weekly alert

To subscribe to our safety alert emails – [Click Here](#)

Industry News


Get the latest on industry news from:

- **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.
- **Tree Frog Forestry News** – daily news with top stories and full news stories on the forest sector in North America and around the world.
- **Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)** – FESBC shares news and information about BC forestry.
- **Truck Loggers Association (TLA)** – a monthly newsletter and 1/4ly magazine (Truck Logger BC) offering stories from BC provincial forestry perspectives, information and updates.

- **Interior Logging Association**
– the ILA insider is a 1/4ly newsletter featuring timber harvesting news, information and updates throughout BC.
- **Western Forestry Contractors' Association** – The Cache is an online space to share wisdom, experience, information, tools and resources generated by the silviculture community.
- **Wood Products Association of Canada (WPAC) News** – read the latest news from WPAC and subscribe to receive the WPAC newsletter.

Industry Links

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. 

Court Case Highlights Dangers of Faulty Bear Bangers and Importance of Expiry Date Awareness

A recent ruling from the Supreme Court of British Columbia has highlighted the serious risks posed by defective or expired bear bangers—pyrotechnic devices commonly used to deter wildlife in remote work environments.

In the case, the incident occurred while a worker was working alone in a remote area north of Fort St. John, BC. After spotting a bear nearby, they attempted to use a bear banger to scare it off. Instead of launching into the air, the device detonated immediately, causing injuries to their hand, legs, vision and most significantly, permanent hearing damage. The device, branded **Star Blazer**, had been discontinued years earlier due to known defects, yet remained available for purchase due to a failed recall process.


Why Equipment Checks Matter

Improper storage or use beyond their shelf life can lead to malfunction. This case is a reminder to:

- Check expiry dates if present and dispose of old bear bangers appropriately. Check with local waste management services on where to take them. Do not throw them away with regular garbage. .
- Train on the proper use of bear bangers and other bear deterrents. Consider what personal protective equipment (gloves, eye and ear protection) is needed when using bear bangers. Store bear bangers properly, away from moisture and extreme temperatures.



- Follow the manufacturer's guidelines and ensure products are sourced from reputable suppliers.

The case serves as a reminder that some safety equipment must be treated with the same diligence as any other hazardous materials. Let this incident be a call to action - regular inspections, proper storage and clear communication about recalls are essential to prevent incidents like these or others from occurring. 

This Fall - Stay Alert and Slow Down

Fall is coming bringing shorter days, wetter roads and the return of school speed zones, all of which contribute to increased hazards on the road. Whether you're heading to a job site or driving through town, it's a good time to adjust your habits behind the wheel.

Slow Down in School Zones

Kids are back in school, and that means school zones are active again. In BC, speeding in a school zone doesn't just put lives at risk, it also comes with **double the fines** and for good reason. Children can be unpredictable when they cross roads and walk near traffic. Slowing down in school zones gives drivers more time to react and helps keep everyone safe.

Be Ready for Slippery Roads and Low Visibility

Fall means rain, fog and reduced visibility on the road which makes driving more dangerous. Fog and rain make it harder to see pedestrians, especially children walking to school or waiting at bus stops.

Here are a few simple tips to stay safe:

- **Drive slower than usual** in poor weather, even if you're under the speed limit.
- **Leave extra space** between you and the vehicle ahead.
- **Use your headlights** to help others see you.
- **Stay alert** for kids near crosswalks and intersections. And don't forget to keep an eye out for wildlife too.

- **Check your vehicle** to ensure your tires are in good condition, your fluids are topped up and you have a good emergency kit and an effective check-in procedure that has been tried and tested.



Safety Starts With You

Driving safely in fall isn't just about following the rules, it's about protecting lives. By staying aware of seasonal hazards and adjusting your driving habits, you help make the roads safer for everyone. 🚗

Register for the Vancouver Island Safety Conference Coming Saturday, November 1, 2025

The 2025 Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) is set for **Saturday, November 1** at the **Vancouver Island Conference Centre** in Nanaimo, BC.

This free, one-day event is a must attend to anyone working in BC's forest industry—from silviculture and harvesting to wood products manufacturing.

This Year's Theme: *Facing the Future Together – The Human Side of Safety*

Join us for a powerful day of learning and collaboration as we explore the human factors that shape safety in the workplace. Through real stories and expert insights, we'll examine how leadership and personal accountability play a role in building safer, healthier work environments.

Keynote Speakers:



- **Sylvia Marusyk** – Occupational Therapist and founder of MindBody Works Inc., Sylvia brings humour and energy to her talk on building healthy workplaces and lives.
- **Steve Howe** – A survivor of a life-changing workplace accident, Steve shares his journey and challenges us to reflect on our personal “why” for working safely.
- **Justin Brien** – Mental health advocate from Salmon Arm, BC, Justin shares his story of recovery and resilience in his keynote, Find Your Voice, Find Yourself.

What to Expect:

- **Inspiring Presentations** – Hear from speakers who bring safety to life through personal experience and professional insight.
- **Networking Opportunities** – Connect with peers, leaders and innovators across the industry.
- **Practical Takeaways** – Learn about the latest safety practices and tools that you can apply in your workplace.
- **VISC Agenda** - Check out what's in store for the day.

Register today and be part of the conversation that's shaping the future of safety in BC forestry and help us move towards our shared goal where every forestry worker goes home safe—every day.

The Vancouver Island Safety Conference is made possible thanks to the generous support of our industry sponsors. 🙏

BCFSC Safety Awards: Celebrating Safety Leadership

Each year, the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) shines a spotlight on the people who go above and beyond to make forestry operations safer for everyone. The **BCFSC Leadership in Safety Awards** are more than just recognition—they're a celebration of the commitment, innovation and leadership that help shape a stronger safety culture across BC's Forest industry.

These awards honour individuals who lead by example, showing that safety isn't just a policy—it's a core value of the work they do. Whether it's through advocacy, innovation or setting a high standard of safety day in and day out, these award winners truly make a difference in the lives of their coworkers and companies.

Nominate a Safety Leader Today

Nominations are open to anyone in forestry. BCFSC encourages peers, employers and workers to recognize those who are making a difference. Winners are announced each fall at the Vancouver Island Safety Conference.

How to Nominate

Simply email us your nomination to info@bcforestsafesafe.org and include:

- Nominee's name (first and last)
- Nominee's Job Title
- Nominee's location and employer
- Nomination Category (Cary White Award, Forest Safety MVP or Manufacturing Safety MVP)
- The reason for the nomination (please provide as much detail as possible)
- Your name and email address

The deadline for nominations is Tuesday, September 23, 2025.



2024 Safety Award Winners

Award Categories

- **Cary White Memorial Award:** This award recognizes an individual who has shown outstanding safety leadership. Someone who consistently goes above and beyond - offering a helping hand, sharing their experience and using their knowledge to support others in reaching their safety goals. This prestigious award is named in memory of Cary White, a passionate safety advocate who left a lasting legacy in the industry.
- **Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award:** This award goes to someone who has shown exceptional commitment to safety in forestry harvesting operations, including silviculture, hand falling, mechanized harvesting, road building or log hauling. It could be a worker, supervisor, manager, safety committee member or company owner that has demonstrated strong leadership in making safety a core part of their daily work.
- **Manufacturing Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award:** This award recognizes an individual, team or company who show excellence in leadership, training, innovation and best practices in wood products manufacturing.

These awards remind us that safety is a shared responsibility—and that leadership can come from any level, in any role. By recognizing those who lead with integrity and care, we can continue to build a culture where safety is always front and centre. 🌲

WorkSafeBC Updates:

Online Injury Reporting Form

WorkSafeBC has recently improved their [online injury reporting form](#) to make it easier and more convenient to report your injury online. The improved form is designed for workers with a physical injury from a single incident at work (i.e., an injury that DID NOT develop gradually over a period of time).

The changes will give workers a convenient, 24/7 mobile-friendly online option to report their injury, in addition to existing options.

Teleclaim will continue to offer service for workers who prefer to connect with them by phone, and for specific circumstances where it's best to call WorkSafeBC.

To learn about the improvements and see a video about how to report an injury online, please visit: [Engagement Hub](#) 📺



Understanding Your Right to a Safe Workplace From Day One

WorkSafeBC promotes workplace health and safety for all workers and employers in British Columbia. Even if you're from another country and just starting or working temporarily in BC, WorkSafeBC covers you with the same rights and responsibilities as other workers in BC, from day one.

Read more from WorkSafeBC on the awareness campaign aptly named [Start Safe, Stay Safe](#) that supports newcomers to BC in their understanding of their worker's right's to a safe workplace. 📺

WorkSafeBC Announces the Average Base Premium Rate Will Remain Unchanged in 2026

WorkSafeBC has announced the preliminary average base premium rate for 2026 will remain at \$1.55 per \$100 of assessable payroll. Subject to final approval by WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors, this will be the ninth consecutive year that the average base rate has remained at this level. Visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#) for more information. 📺

Policy Consultations and Public Hearings



Proposed Changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

[Part 12, Tools, Machinery and Equipment, sections 12.74 to 12.80.2 — Automotive Lifts and Other Vehicle Supports](#)

Feedback Submission Deadline
– Friday, September 5, 2025 by 4:30pm

[Part 6, Substance Specific Requirements — Combustible Dusts and Parts 8 and 31 — Standards Updates](#)

Virtual Public Hearing - September 24, 2025 | [Click here](#) for details on how to view the public hearing online.

Feedback Submission Deadline
– Friday, September 26, 2025 by 4:30pm. 📺