



Vancouver Island Safety Conference



Facing the Future Together: The Human Side of Safety

Welcome to the 18th annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference

Thank you for joining us. This event is made possible by generous industry sponsorship and volunteers.

We hope you'll get some valuable information out of this year's conference that focusses on how we can bridge generations of forestry workers through a strong safety culture.

Share the insights you gain from today's conference with your team and help us meet our collective vision of ... **every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.**



Share your feedback and help us plan for 2026. Complete the survey to be eligible to win - a Razer Gaming Kit* including Blackshark V2 Pro White Edition Wireless Console ESports Headset (can be used for Xbox, PS5/4, PC/MAC, Nintendo Switch), Aether Standing Light Bars, Leviathan V2 X PC/Gaming Soundbar and Aether Monitor Light Bar.

Scan the QR Code to access the conference survey for your chance to win.



Conference Wi-Fi:



VICC Guest



Vision2050

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Your Day at a Glance

The Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) is a FREE full-day, in-person conference open to all BC forestry workers. Take a look at what's in store this year.

Engaging Speakers: Throughout the day, you will hear from safety advocates and experts who will be providing key insights into forestry safety.

Keynote Speakers

Steve Howe - shares his workplace accident experience
Sylvia Marusyk - talks about the effects of stress
Justin Brien - talks about mental health and substance use

Presenting Speakers

Marla Guldbransen and Nicole Arkle - discuss DEI
Colleen Skinner and Elise Kobylanski- discuss Return to Work
John Jack - discusses work safety and mentorship
D'Arcy Henderson - talks about safety culture

Safety Award Winners: Join us in celebrating this year's winners of the Carey White Lifetime Achievement Award, Forest Safety MVP and Manufacturing Safety MVP

Conference Exhibitors: During the breaks, don't forget to visit our exhibitors hall and check out the trade show booths featuring targeted forestry safety products and services tailored to your needs.

Community Fundraising: for 18 years, the Vancouver Island Safety Conference has been giving back to our communities by raising funds and goods for local and provincial communities in need.



Food Drive - Each year we ask conference attendees to bring a non-perishable food item in lieu of their conference fee for the **Loaves and Fishes Nanaimo Community Food Bank**. We also accept cash donations if you forget your food item.



50/50 Draw - Get your 50/50 tickets and help us support the **Vancouver Island Mental Health Society (VIMHS)**. Get 5 tickets for \$5. Draw will be made at the end of the conference.



Silent Auction - Our silent auction will be set up in the main entrance next to the registration desk. We've got a great line-up of items for you to bid on with proceeds going to **KidSport Nanaimo**.

Loaves and Fishes



VIMHS



KidSport



Share your Feedback: Each year we conduct a participant survey. Your valuable feedback helps us plan for the following year's conference and everyone who completes the survey will be automatically entered to win: A Razer Gaming Kit* including Blackshark V2 Pro WhiteEdition Wireless Console ESports Headset (can be used for Xbox, PS5/4, PC/MAC, Nintendo Switch), Aether Standing Light Bars, Leviathan V2 X PC/Gaming Soundbar and Aether Monitor Light Bar.

Scan the QR Codes for direct access to the survey and charity/fundraising links.

Survey Access





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Facing the Future Together – The Human Side of Safety

Today's Agenda

7:30am - 8:30am	Registration	
8:30am - 8:40am	Opening Remarks	Mike Milholm Emcee
8:40am - 8:50am	First Nations Welcome	Geraldine Manson Snuneymuxw First Nation
8:50am - 9:00am	Moment of Silence	Mike Milholm Emcee
9:00am - 9:10am	Setting the Stage	Rob Moonen BCFSC
9:10am - 9:25am	<i>Forestry Together</i>	Marla Guldbrandsen, BCFSC & Nicole Arkle, Gorman Group
9:25am - 10:25am	<i>Workplace Safety: What's Your Why</i>	Keynote Speaker Steve Howe
10:25am - 10:45am	Morning Break	
10:45am - 11:15am	<i>Return to Work Obligations and Best Practices</i>	Colleen Skinner and Elise Kobylanski WorkSafeBC
11:15am - 11:35am	<i>Taking the Time to Do It Right</i>	John Jack Huu-ay-aht First Nations
11:35am - 11:55am	<i>Pursuing a Culture of Safety</i>	D'Arcy Henderson Mosaic Forest Management
11:55am - 12:10pm	Leadership in Safety Award Presentations	Rob Moonen BCFSC
12:10pm - 1:10pm	Lunch Break	
1:10pm - 2:10pm	<i>Surviving to Thriving: A Guide to Self-Health</i>	Keynote Speaker Sylvia Marusyk
2:10pm - 3:10pm	<i>Find Your Voice, Find Yourself</i>	Keynote Speaker Justin Brien
3:10pm - 3:20pm	Wrap-up	Rob Moonen BCFSC
3:20pm - 3:30pm	Prize Announcements and Survey Feedback	Mike Milholm Emcee



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2025 Keynote Speakers



Steve Howe
Former BC Faller and
Workplace Accident
Survivor

Like many people, Steve Howe never imagined he would fall victim to a workplace accident that would almost cost him his life. In this impactful presentation, Steve tells his moving story and how he thought the rules and best practices to be safe did not apply to him.

Steve's story of his tragic accident, his long recovery and his return to work will inspire us to learn the reasons WHY Steve now works safely. Steve shares how he uses a combination of his experience as Vice President of Safety and the story of his avoidable accident to inspire his own team to work safely and how he achieves his number one professional goal: creating ZERO accident workplaces.

With over 18 years on worksites since his accident, Steve knows the safety challenges facing industry and the people working in it. His keynote not only will inspire us to think about WHY we should work safely, but he also shares how we can establish a culture of safety by keeping it simple and making every word count.

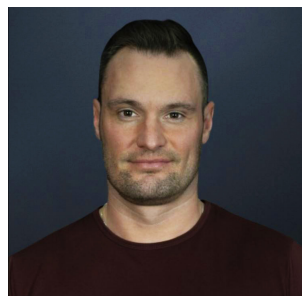


Sylvia Marusyk
Occupational Therapist

Sylvia Marusyk is an Occupational Therapist with over 30 years of experience and expertise in the field of health and safety. She emphasizes that prevention is the key to creating happy, healthy individuals, employees and businesses. This industry expert is leading the charge, and challenging the way we look at health, safety and wellness. Her dynamic presentation, SURVIVING TO THRIVING: A GUIDE TO SELF HEALTH, explains how stress affects the mind and body, especially chronic stress, and gives us specific tools to move from survival into thriving - not just personally but also in the workplace. You'll also learn practical solutions to deal with the three universal triggers of stress, to help not only mitigate current challenges but also to PREVENT future challenges, at home and work.

Her incredibly dynamic presentation style will leave us laughing with the tools and confidence to reshape safety in the workplace and in our personal lives - ultimately changing our lives for the better by reactivating our resilience and helping us move from surviving to thriving.

Presentation
Resource



Justin Brien
Mental Health Advocate

Justin Brien is a dedicated Mental Health Advocate, Inspirational Speaker, and Life Coach based in Cochrane, Alberta. Throughout his adult life he has been challenged by battles with substance misuse, rooted in mental health issues. Facing loneliness and uncertainty about the future, he made a pivotal decision to seek his purpose in life, driven by a strong will to live and succeed.

Embracing change, Justin left behind his past struggles and embarked on a path of self-discovery. He sought and accepted the help he needed, which allowed him to overcome his substance abuse and fortify his mental health. By openly sharing his story and knowledge, he helps fight against the stigma around mental health.

Presentation
Resource





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2025 Presenting Speakers



Marla Guldbransen
BCFSC

Marla Guldbransen, BCFSC's Falling Manager, and Gorman Group's Communications Coordinator, Nicole Arkle will discuss the progress and challenges of fostering a more inclusive and representative workforce within BC's forest sector.

Their presentation called Forestry Together will explore how we can build a network of allies and spark conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion with an end-goal of creating a workforce that not only reflects community diversity but values different perspectives and ensures employees have the necessary support they need to sustain a career in forestry.



Nicole Arkle
Gorman Group



Elise Kobylanski
WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC's Elise Kobylanski, Return-to-Work Service's Client Service Manager and Colleen Skinner, registered nurse and Return-To-Work specialist will discuss effective strategies for supporting workers in safely returning to work. They will highlight practical accommodations and outline employer responsibilities and insights into legal obligations, collaborative planning and the importance of early intervention. The session emphasizes that successful RTW outcomes depend on communication, flexibility, and a shared commitment to worker well-being.



Colleen Skinner
WorkSafeBC



John Jack
Huu-ay-aht First Nations

John Alan Jack (Sayaac̓ath), Chief Councillor of Huu-ay-aht First Nations, will share a personal story about his father's workplace injury, highlighting the critical importance of safety education and proper training. He will emphasize how investing time and resources into doing things the right way—especially in high-risk environments—is not just a matter of compliance, it's a moral and leadership responsibility. His presentation offers a powerful reminder that investing in safety is the foundation for long-term success in communities and industries alike.



D'Arcy Henderson
Mosaic Forest Services

D'Arcy Henderson, Sr. Vice President of Timberlands and COO at Mosaic, and Chair of the BC Forest Safety Council, brings over 20 years of leadership in forestry.

In his presentation, D'Arcy explores how small, daily habits shape safer crews and stronger safety cultures. He emphasizes the power of visible, repeatable actions and empowering every worker to speak up. His message is clear: safety is a shared responsibility, built through consistent behaviour and a commitment to change.



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2025 Leadership in Safety Award Winners

The Leadership in Safety Awards shine a spotlight on those with outstanding safety achievement in BC forestry. Nominations are submitted from anyone within the industry who knows an individual, crew, contractor, company, supplier, or consultant who has made meaningful strides in safety. These annual awards honour those who have significantly contributed to our shared vision of seeing every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.

Congratulations to the 2025 Winners!

Carey White Lifetime Achievement Award

This special award is presented to someone who has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving safety awareness, expanding safety knowledge, developing safety skills at ground level and building a lasting culture of safety among BC's forestry workers. It is someone who goes the extra mile to help others reach their safety goals with a helping hand, proven experience and knowledge.

2025 RECIPIENT: BJARNE NIELSEN | BEAR SAFETY SERVICES LTD.

This year's recipient of the Cary White Lifetime Achievement Award is Bjarne Nielsen who is being recognized for his outstanding contributions to forestry safety in BC. With a career spanning more than 25 years Bjarne has dedicated his life to protecting the well-being of forestry workers and fostering a culture of safety that continues to shape the industry.

A Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP), Bjarne is known not only for his extensive expertise but also for his genuine care and mentorship. He began as an Occupational Safety Officer with WorkSafeBC, where he spent 18 years helping organizations and individuals navigate the complexities of workplace safety. As part of his role, he participated in numerous forest safety committees and working groups such as the Faller Technical Advisory Committee and the Vancouver Island Safety Conference Steering Committee.

Beyond his role at WorkSafeBC, Bjarne has served as an instructor with the BC Forest Safety Council, where he has delivered upwards of 130 sessions to approximately 1000 training participants, conducted external audits and supported the implementation of safety programs across the province. His credentials are extensive and include being a BCFSC BASE External Auditor, a Certified OSSE External Auditor with the BC Manufacturing Safety Alliance and a Qualified Supervisor/Trainer (QST). He has worked in all phases of the forest industry and is a recognized subject matter expert in program development and accident investigation.

One of the many individuals impacted by Bjarne's work is Stacey Sproule, who shared this heartfelt testimonial:

"As long as I've been active in forestry, I've worked with Bjarne to bring about the betterment of forest worker safety. He was first my OSO, but soon became a teacher, mentor, and partner in making safety a priority in everything I did. Without his support, I may have taken a very different path. I'm forever grateful for our synergy—it radically changed the trajectory of my career and helped me support others in understanding their own value and role in safety."

Bjarne's legacy is one of compassion, knowledge and unwavering dedication. He has gone above and beyond time and again—offering guidance, sharing his expertise and ensuring others succeed in their safety goals. His work has prevented injuries and inspired a new generation of safety leaders. His contributions will continue to shape the future of forestry safety in BC for years to come.



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2025 Leadership in Safety Award Winners

Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

This award recognizes an individual or group that has made a notable contribution to forest industry safety within their harvesting or silviculture operation or company.

2025 RECIPIENT: DALE JONES | OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT | TOLKO INDUSTRIES LTD – HEFFLEY CREEK

We're pleased to honour Dale Jones as the 2025 Forest Safety MVP for his outstanding contributions to safety in forestry over more than 30 years with Tolko Industries Ltd.

As Operations Superintendent at the Heffley Creek division, Dale has a deep understanding of forest operations and a genuine passion for creating safer working environments. He is well-known for his practical, common-sense approach to safety and has a natural ability to cut through the noise and focus on what really matters.

Dale is widely respected for bringing clarity and focus to safety conversations with openness and honesty. He's someone who listens, engages and encourages others to take ownership of safety in their daily work. His calm, reasoned perspective has helped foster a culture where safety is not just a priority—it's part of the way people think and work together. It has helped shape a culture where everyone feels responsible and empowered.

His impact goes far beyond his own crew. Dale's leadership has influenced safety practices across the company and inspired others to raise the bar. He's the kind of person who makes you want to do better—because he's always doing better himself.

Whether he's out in the field or working with teams behind the scenes, his integrity, consistency and care for others have made a real difference, and this award is not just a tribute to his years of service but a well-earned recognition of the lasting impact he's made on forest safety in BC.

Manufacturing Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

Similar to the Forest Safety MVP, this award recognizes an individual or group that has made a notable contribution to wood products manufacturing safety within their sawmill or wood pellet operation or company.

2025 RECIPIENT: SHANE NORBURY | MILLWRIGHT, WESTERN FOREST PRODUCTS – CHEMAINUS SAWMILL DIVISION

This year we recognize Shane Norbury as the 2025 recipient of the Manufacturing Safety MVP Award. Shane is a Red Seal Millwright at Western Forest Products' Chemainus Sawmill Division, and he's been a standout safety leader throughout his career.

Shane has served on the site's safety committee for four consecutive terms, including time as co-chair. His leadership style is all about leading by example—he's someone who genuinely cares about the health and safety of those around him and consistently puts that care into action.

Whether it's championing a plant-wide safety guarding initiative or checking in with production workers to make sure their workstations are safe and ergonomic, Shane is always looking for ways to improve safety on the ground. His attention to detail and hands-on approach have made a real difference in how safety is practiced and understood at the mill.

People who work with Shane describe him as approachable, knowledgeable, and deeply committed to making sure everyone goes home safe at the end of the day. He's helped build a culture where safety is a shared responsibility, and where workers feel supported and empowered to speak up and take action. Shane's dedication has had a lasting impact, and this award is a well-earned recognition of everything he's done to make the Chemainus Sawmill a safer place to work.



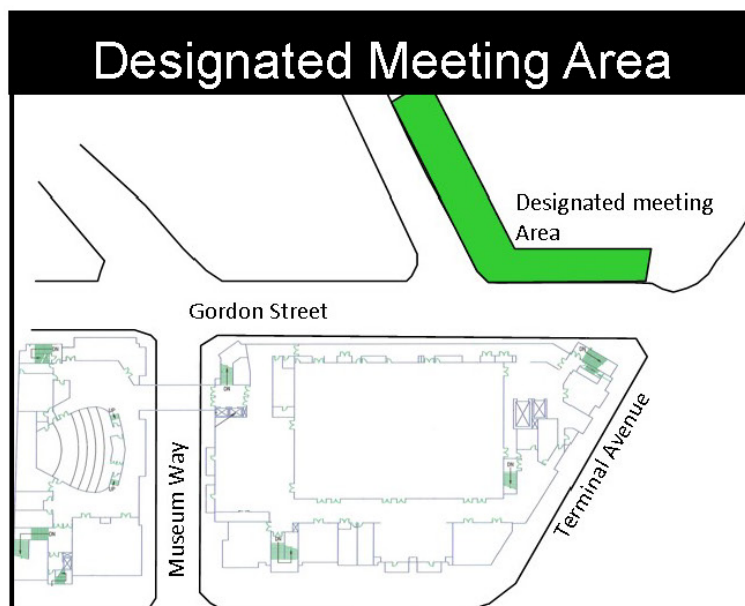
Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Prior to your event

Maintain, to the best of your abilities, and based on the nature of your event, an attendance record of the delegates, exhibitors and related attendees.

Evacuation Procedures

1. Gather the delegates of your event to prepare them to exit together.
2. Lead your event delegates to the exit outlined in the Emergency Evacuation Map located by the EXIT DOOR in each room. Be sure to bring attendance record.
3. If the exit outlined on the Emergency Evacuation Map should be inaccessible, move to the next closest exit.
4. Once outside, lead your delegates to the designated assembly area at the corner of Gordon St. and Cameron Rd. behind the Great Canadian Casino across from the Conference Centre's loading bay. See the map below.
5. Once at the assembly area, report to the VICC associate in charge (Incident Commander) and let them know the status of your group.
6. Delegates with Physical Disabilities should be placed under the supervision of designated personnel assigned by the client. Inform the designated group to evacuate to primary or secondary stairwell landing. Advise VICC Incident Commander the status of the designated group to inform the Fire Department for assistance.
7. If your group disperses after leaving the VICC and you are not able to report to the Incident Commander, call (250) 244-4050 and leave a message detailing your group name and indicate all persons associated with your event have cleared the building safely.





In the event of a Fire Alarm

The Vancouver Island Conference Centre's Fire Alarm consists of three (3) high pitched alarms, followed by a short break, and three (3) more alarms.

When the Fire Alarm sounds, there is a fire-related event happening in the building. Follow the evacuation procedures immediately after it sounds.

In the event of an Earthquake

If you are inside a building, **DUCK, COVER AND HOLD.**

1. Take cover underneath a desk or table and grasp the legs.
2. If there is no furniture, anchor yourself, keep low, kneel or sit on the floor to maintain your balance. Protect your head and neck.
3. Count slowly to 60.
4. Face away from objects that could fall on you. Stay away from windows, skylights and shelves.
5. Falling debris may cause injury. Stay where you are. Do not run, as there is a danger of falling debris.
6. If you are in an elevator, press all floor buttons and get out when you can. If the power fails, the elevator will stop and the lights will remain off until emergency power is restored. Call for help using the emergency telephone in the elevator and wait for assistance.
7. If you are in a crowded room, get close to the ground and try to protect yourself from falling debris.
9. Follow evacuation procedures.

In the event of a power failure

The Vancouver Island Conference Centre is equipped with an emergency generator which will supply emergency lighting approximately 10 seconds following a power failure and last for the duration of the day.

1. During this time no other electrical services are available, including Audio Visual and Catering.
2. Unless an announcement is made to evacuate the building, you may remain in your room until such time as you see fit to leave the building.

In the event of a Medical Emergency

Please note that the Vancouver Island Conference Centre has an "AED" (Automatic External Defibrillator) on-site in case of a cardiac arrest emergency.

1. Call 911 using your mobile device or dial 9, then 911 on *in-house phone*.
2. Contact onsite personal for assistance or dial (250) 244-4050



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Thank you to our sponsors for their generosity. Their support allows us to provide free admission for conference attendees.



BC Forest Safety

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