



SAFETY ALERT

OF THE MONTH

PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION

Overhead Hazards

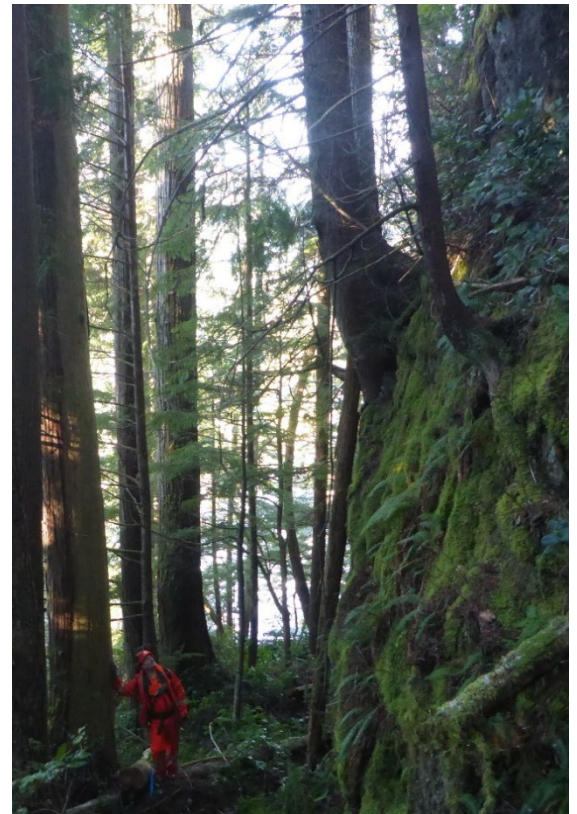
AOM: 2025-10-17

Here's some recent incidents from WorkSafeBC that involved overhead hazards:

- A worker was installing wrappers on a loaded log hauler when a log (over 15ft. long, 8 in. in diameter) dislodged and struck the worker's safety headgear.
- A faller was working at the base of a large-diameter red cedar when they were struck from above by a large tree limb.
- A group of workers were conducting basic chainsaw training at a field site when a suspected dangerous tree (26in. in diameter x 89 ft. tall), previously assessed as a safe tree for the work activity, unexpectedly fell. The tree struck a young worker about 30ft. from the tree's base.
- A faller was falling a large old-growth hemlock tree. As the faller began retreating to a safe location, they were struck by a 10ft. long dead top of a yellow cedar.

Safety Considerations:

- Forests are full of overhead hazards including dead or leaning trees that could be unstable and broken branches or tops perched in the canopy.
- Changes in weather can create new overhead hazards. Strong winds cause trees to move and potentially come down. Rain, fog and snow can make the hazards difficult to see.
- Chain reactions can trigger overhead hazards to fall. For example, a dead top might be stable on most days but if a falling tree or machine disturbs the site, the top can break off and fall.
- It doesn't take much size or weight to cause considerable damage when an object drops from overhead. Hardhats provide some protection but even a small branch can cause injury. Small diameter trees are often overlooked as hazards but consistently cause injuries when they come down unexpectedly.
- Overhead hazards can persist between phases. A good practice is to share hazard information with the next phase





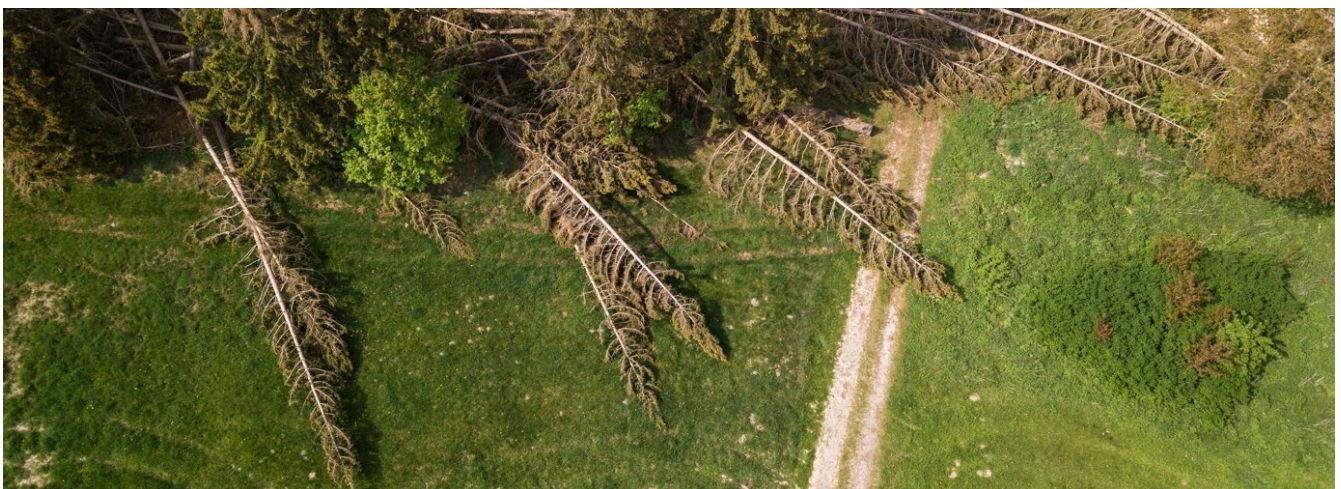
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so they can manage it appropriately. An example is a road building phase passing along information about broken tops or limbs in the canopy to the logging phase.

- Steep slopes can also create overhead upslope hazards like loose debris – rocks, logs or stumps can all dislodge and roll long distances.
- There are still overhead hazards in non-forest areas, like powerlines or suspended loads. Watch out for people doing work above, objects or debris can be dropped or dislodged onto workers below.
- Frequently looking up for hazards is fatiguing and late in the shift, workers may not check as often as they should. Supervisors can help with this, coaching workers to be consistent with their hazard checks as well as being an extra set of eyes to spot hazards that were missed.
- What to do about overhead hazards?
 - Practice your identification skills and consult more experienced workers and ask what they see.
 - Assess the risk - what could happen and how bad could it be? Training like the [Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor course](#) can help you accurately assess the risks.
 - Take appropriate action to reduce the risk. Eliminate hazards where possible such as removing dangerous trees or removing yourself from the area. Don't think that PPE alone will be adequate to prevent injuries from overhead hazards.

Resources:

- 1) [Online Training – Introduction to Dangerous Trees on Forestry Worksites](#)
- 2) [Blowdown safety alert](#)
- 3) [Powerline safety alert](#)





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BCFSC Latest News & Resources

New Course – Virtual Instructor Led Basic Incident Investigation – The regular Basic Incident Investigation training is also available as a requested instructor-led virtual course which is convenient for companies with employees located around the province. It includes a combination of instructor-led virtual meetings and learning activities through BCFSC's online Learning Centre. The training is scheduled as two half-day sessions to provide flexibility for participants who are actively working.

Forest Safety News – read the latest issue of the FSN

FIRS App – The full version of the BCFSC FIRS App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies and COR audit forms management.

BCFSC Training:

November 4 - 7 | Falling Supervisor – Campbell River

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

November 13 - 14 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

November 14 | Basic Incident Investigation – Campbell River

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

November 24 - 25 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

November 27 - 28 | Leadership and Communication for Forest Supervisors – Prince George

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Refer to the [Training section](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.

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.

Take a look at our [FREE assessment forms](#) for Basic Forest Workers, Yarding, Mechanized Harvesting and Road Building.

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