



FTAC Meeting Update

At the September FTAC meeting, WorkSafeBC's Occupational Safety Officer Chris Miller presented on the responsibilities of the prime contractor and licensee.

When it comes to health and safety, everyone in the workplace has distinct responsibilities. Whether you're an owner, prime contractor, employer, supervisor or worker, you have a role to play in keeping the workplace safe. For more information on roles, rights and responsibilities, please visit [Roles, rights & responsibilities - WorkSafeBC](#).

Owners/Licensee

On a worksite, the owner is ultimately responsible for health and safety. In many cases, the owner is also in the role of employer. If you're both the owner of the workplace and the employer, you must meet your responsibilities for both roles.

Responsibilities:

- ✓ Maintain the premises in a way that ensures the health and safety of people working on site.
- ✓ Disclose to employers or prime contractors the full details of any potential hazards in or around the workplace so they can be eliminated or controlled.
- ✓ Comply with occupational health and safety requirements and orders.

Planning – Owner/Licensee [\(OHSR 26.2.1\)](#)

The owner of a forestry operation must ensure that all activities of the forestry operation are both planned and conducted in a manner consistent with this Regulation and with safe work practices acceptable to the Board.

This starts at the layout stage, with consideration for how the block will be harvested and replanted without creating additional risks.

Safe Access and Emergency Response must also be considered.

Assignment of Prime Contractor [\(OHSR 26.1.1\)](#)

If the owner of a forestry operation enters into an agreement referred to in paragraph (a) of the definition of “prime contractor” in section 13 of the Act designating a person to be the prime contractor for a workplace, the owner must ensure that the person designated:

- ✓ is qualified to be the prime contractor in respect of that workplace and
- ✓ has the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of prime contractor under the Act, including, without limitation, authority over any employer, worker or other person who may be carrying out the work of the owner at the workplace.

A Prime Contractor must be designated in a written agreement. The Owner/Licensee must also give to the prime contractor all information known to the owner that is necessary to identify and eliminate or control hazards to the health or safety of persons at the workplace.

Prime Contractor

For most forestry operations, the owner is a licensee that hires contractors to complete projects. Licensees can range from large forest companies to smaller companies that have successfully bid on Timber Sale Licenses or individual Woodlot License holders.

Responsibility is not transferable:

The overall responsibility for coordination cannot be transferred to a subcontractor. While tasks can be assigned, the ultimate legal liability rests with the designated prime contractor.

[OHSR 26.1.1\(b\)](#) not more than one person holds the designation of prime contractor for that workplace at any given time.

While prime contractors have overall responsibility for health and safety on a worksite, employers still retain responsibility for the health and safety of their own workers and other workers impacted by their work.

Prime contractor requirements are only in place when there is a multi-employer workplace. A multiple-employer workplace means a workplace where workers of 2 or more employers are working at the same time.

Responsibilities

- ✓ Coordinate the occupational health and safety activities of all employers, workers and anyone else at the workplace.
- ✓ Establish and maintain procedures to ensure occupational health and safety requirements at the workplace are followed by all parties.

Planning – Prime contractor [\(OHSR 26.2\(2\)\)](#)

Every person who has knowledge and control of any particular activity in a forestry operation must ensure that the activity is both planned and conducted in a manner consistent with this Regulation and with safe work practices acceptable to the Board.

Prime contractor should be conducting a risk assessment with any subcontractors to identify the hazards and risks on site and plan for the control measures needed to effectively manage the risk.

Workers can then be oriented to the plan at the initial safety meeting. This plan should be updated as needed with the updates being communicated to all involved.

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Risk-based Management Approach



Hazard: A hazard is any existing or potential condition which by itself or interacting with other factors, can cause injury or death. The presence of more hazards in combination increases the chance of harm.

Risk: The chance of injury or disease resulting from contact with or exposure to a hazard.

Risk assessment: An assessment of the probability (or likelihood) of contact with or exposure to a hazard and the probable (or likely) consequences associated with that contact or exposure on a low to high severity scale of injury or illness, with death being the most severe.

Probability: The likelihood that contact with or exposure to a hazard will occur. Likelihood increases as the frequency and/or duration of exposure to a hazard increases.

Consequence/Severity: This takes account of the acute risk (happens suddenly) and/or chronic risk (happens slowly) of a hazard.

Prime Contractor Role & Responsibilities

The prime contractor plays a key role in workplace health and safety. This role involves coordinating the activities of all other employers on site.

It also involves putting in place and maintaining a system that ensures all employers comply with their health and safety responsibilities.

The prime contractor should know the work activities and hazards at the workplace, as well as how to ensure risks are controlled effectively.

Qualified Prime Contractor

Means being knowledgeable of the work, the hazards involved and the means to control the hazards, by reason of education, training, experience or a combination thereof.

Prime contractors are responsible for coordinating the safety of a workplace. This applies to all phases being undertaken.

Have a Written Agreement

There can only be one designated Prime Contractor. At a multiple-employer workplace, it's essential to have a written, signed agreement in which the owner of the workplace designates a prime contractor.

Misunderstandings can occur when safety roles and responsibilities are unclear. Verbal agreements about who is the prime contractor are not valid. They can lead to confusion and compromise worker safety.

Without this written agreement, the owner is the prime contractor.

Coordinate Health and Safety Activities and Ensure Compliance

In order to fulfil their obligations, a Prime Contractor must establish an effective system to ensure sitewide compliance with the health and safety requirements.

The system may include elements such as:

- Hazard identification and risk management
- First aid assessment and first aid services
- An emergency response plan, that considers the unique hazards and operations of the site and ensure all necessary training, equipment and supplies are available (tested).
- Site orientations
- Ensuring workers are adequately trained
- Inspections, regular according to the risk
- Safety meetings, minimum monthly
- Incident reporting and investigation 🚨

New Faller Training

The fall session of BCFSC's New Faller Training course took place September 25 – October 27, 2025, with four candidates completing the course. A big thank you to Conor Pierce of Mosaic Forest Management and Gordon Bay Logging for providing the timber site for the course. 🌲



Back row, left to right:
Trainers Wade Schalm, Jacob VanDort, Wayne Miller and John Jacobsen

Front row, left to right:
Trainees Jakob Fritz, Spencer Therrien, Isaiah Cabaj, and Liam Wakefield.