

FOREST SAFETY NEWS

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2025 CEO Report

By Rob Moonen

In the spirit of full disclosure, I've taken the opportunity to reprint and update this article from a previous edition of FSN. In my role, I often get asked what keeps me up at night which is why I want to reinforce the importance of working collectively as the sector continues to navigate these challenging times.

In times of uncertainty and tragedy, it's difficult not to get distracted from our daily work activities. The past few years have presented the forest industry with some unique challenges. These challenges have put additional pressure on all forestry workers and can cause high-production pressure and a rush to get the work done once workers are back on the block or in the production environment.

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, consider the following points to ensure that production pressures are effectively managed to ensure safe operations:

- It's tempting to work as much and as fast as possible when work is available; however, don't take shortcuts. Although shortcuts can lead to temporary benefits, they also greatly increase the risk of a serious incident, or worse. During these times, it's important that we lookout for one another. As leaders, co-workers and colleagues, we all have a role to play to help mitigate risks – if you see something, say something and do something.

During challenging times, actions from leadership become even more important and define the culture and set the tone of how work gets done. As leaders, managers, and supervisors, it's important to remember what gets recognized, gets repeated and what we permit, we promote.

- After long shutdowns, the pressures to "get 'er done" can be great. Companies want to get roads built, timber fallen, and logs to market. Workers want to get some decent paycheques to the bank. Other phases that follow behind you may want you to keep working so they can keep working. When it starts blowing, snowing, and raining hard, those pressures can influence decisions around weather related shutdowns that should be based on worker safety. It is important to maintain your shutdown criteria. Money problems can be very real, but not worth risking you or your fellow workers safety over.
- Increased pressure and additional work can be physically and mentally tiring for all workers. Monitor yourself and others around you for signs of fatigue. Be self-aware and think critically about the decisions you are making. Stress and fatigue can lead to poor decision making, potentially leading to safety issues. Be aware and adjust your work as required.

Welcome to the Winter 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@bcforestsafes.org or call 1-877-741-1060.

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- Stress and uncertainty can cause mental health concerns. People can turn to drugs and alcohol to help cope or self-medicate. Be aware and have tools and resources available to help you and your workers deal with these issues before they become bigger problems. There are resources available on BCFSC's Mental Health Resource Page.
- Work with your team of workers, suppliers, subcontractors, and clients. Communicate the challenges you face so they are aware and use their knowledge and experience to come up with potential solutions. This may alleviate some of the pressure and help to focus on safe operations.

As an industry, we've demonstrated that when we work together, we can accomplish great things. Let's ensure that we continue to focus on what's in our control to meet our collective goal of **ensuring every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.** 🌲



What's New

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

BCFSC Website Survey – weigh in our 2026 website refresh. Share your feedback and let us know how we can improve our website.

Training Calendar – Plan your 2026 safety training. Our in-person training calendar is now fully loaded on the BCFSC website. Take a look and see what's in store for 2026. Is there a course you see that you might want delivered directly to your organization? We also provide requested training 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.

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 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.

Interior Logging Association (ILA) – the ILA insider is a 1/4ly newsletter featuring timber harvesting news, information and updates throughout BC.



Happy Holidays
BC Forest Safety

Extending you our very best for a **safe, healthy and happy holiday season.**

BCFSC Holiday Office Hours

Wednesday, Dec 24	8am – 3:00pm
Thursday, Dec 25	CLOSED
Friday, Dec 26	CLOSED
Wednesday, Dec 31	8am – 3:00pm
Thursday, Jan 1	CLOSED
Friday, Jan 2	8am – 4:30pm
Regular hours resume	

Truck Loggers Association (TLA) – a monthly newsletter and 1/4ly magazine (Truck Logger BC) offering stories from BC provincial forestry perspectives, information and updates.

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 – get the latest information on WorkSafeBC policy and regulation updates, resource development, risk advisories and more.

Help Us Improve Our Website – We Want Your Feedback!

BCFSC is planning a refresh of our website in 2026, and we'd love your input.

Whether you visit our site regularly or just occasionally, your experience matters to us. Tell us what works well, and what could be better and give us ideas about features or information you'd like to see added or improved. All of your feedback will help us build a better site that will help meet your needs.

We created a short survey where you can share your thoughts. It will only take a few minutes, and your input will be used to assist in developing a better, more useful and user-friendly site.

We appreciate your time and insights!

[Click here to access the survey](#) or scan the QR Code. 📱



Stay Safe on BC Roads This Winter

Winter weather increases the risk for workers who drive for work. Snow, ice, rain and reduced daylight all contribute to increased crash rates during the colder months. Many incidents are preventable with proper planning, training and equipment.

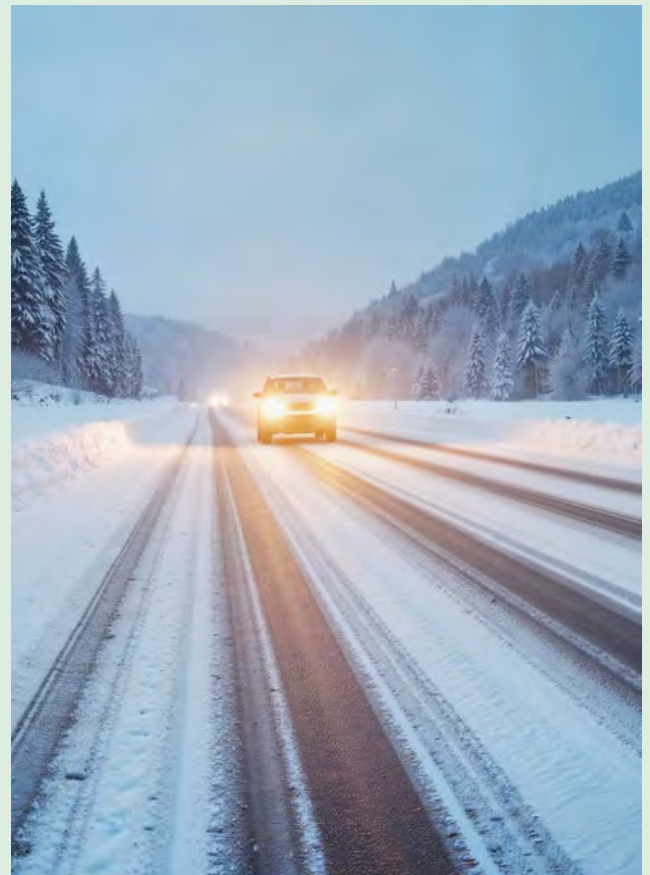
Employers have a legal responsibility to protect workers who drive for work and ensure their safety while on the road. The [Winter Driving Safety campaign](#) from Road Safety at Work has practical tools, training and resources to help you and your workers prepare for the challenges of winter driving.

Free Resources for Employers

- [Winter Driving Safety Planning Toolkit](#)
- [Tailgate Meeting Guide](#)
- [Winter Driving Employer Checklist](#)
- [Winter Driving Safe Work Procedures Template](#)
- [Online Course: Making Winter Driving Safer for Your Employees](#)

Free Resources and Training for Drivers

- [Winter Driving Safety Tips](#)
- [Winter Driving Quiz](#)
- [Online Course: Become a Safer Winter Driver](#)



Complete a course by December 19, 2025 for a chance to win a set of winter tires from Kal Tire! 🏆

Danger Tree Blasting Survey

The Danger Tree Blasting Committee was established in 2021 to explore initiatives that make danger tree blasting an accessible, efficient and effective tool for reducing risk to hand fallers and other forestry workers in Coastal operations.

Currently, there are fewer than 10 certified danger tree blasters in BC. The committee has recently examined possible reasons for the decline in certifications and believes it may be linked to explosive storage regulations or the certification and renewal requirements set by WorkSafeBC.

To gain better insight into current practices, barriers and benefits of danger tree blasting, the committee has created a survey for active fallers. The information gathered will help guide future decisions on regulations, training and in-field support for fallers. If you are an active faller, please consider completing the survey.

[Click here](#) to take the Danger Tree Blasting Survey or scan the QR Code to access. 📱



2026 BC Forestry Conferences & Events

Start planning for 2026 and register for these upcoming forestry-related conferences. 📅



Conference / Event	Dates	Location	Information & Registration
81st Annual Truck Loggers Association (TLA) Convention	Jan. 14 - 16	Vancouver, BC	www.tla.ca/convention/
23rd Annual BC Natural Resources Forum	Jan. 20 - 22	Prince George, BC	www.bcnaturalresourcesforum.com
2026 Western Forestry Contractors Association Conference & Trade Show	Jan. 28 - 30	Victoria, BC	www.wfca.ca
2026 Forest Professionals of BC Conference & AGM	Feb. 4 – 6	Vancouver, BC	www.fpbc.ca/professional-development/continuing-professional-development/annual-forestry-conference
2026 Council of Forest Industries (COFI) Convention	Apr. 8 - 10	Vancouver, BC	www.cofi.org
2026 BC First Nations Forestry Conference	May 12 - 24	Kelowna, BC	www.forestrycouncil.ca
2026 BCFSC Interior Safety Conference	Apr. 30	Kamloops, BC	www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/
68th Annual Interior Logging (ILA) Conference	Apr. 30 - May 2	Kamloops, BC	www.interiorlogging.org
10th Annual Indigenous Resource Opportunities Conference	June 3 - 5	Nanaimo, BC	www.bciroc.ca
2026 Vancouver Island Safety Conference	Oct. 17	Nanaimo, BC	www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/

Drones, Done Safely: Practical Ways RPAS Reduce Risk in B.C. Forestry

By Taylor Alexander, Stinson Aerial Services Inc., Community Development & Digital Media Specialist

Forestry is full of places where people would rather not traverse: steep, broken slopes; active cable corridors; fire-damaged blocks where snags and ash pits wait underfoot. Small uncrewed aircraft, also known as drones or RPAS, are already shifting who needs to be there and for how long. When they're integrated with solid procedures and flown in compliance with Transport Canada's aviation rules, drones are proving to be a simple, practical way to cut exposure and improve decision-making on forestry blocks.

The clearest safety win is during line work and layout on steep ground. Instead of sending a crew across gullies and bluffs to pull light messenger line, a drone can lift and place a quarter-inch rope along a planned corridor in minutes. That reduces the time people spend traversing hazardous terrain and keeps them out of the fall line. The drone doesn't replace a qualified crew though; it minimizes where the riskiest minutes happen. Operators stage from stable ground with clear egress, while the aircraft effortlessly does the scrambling.

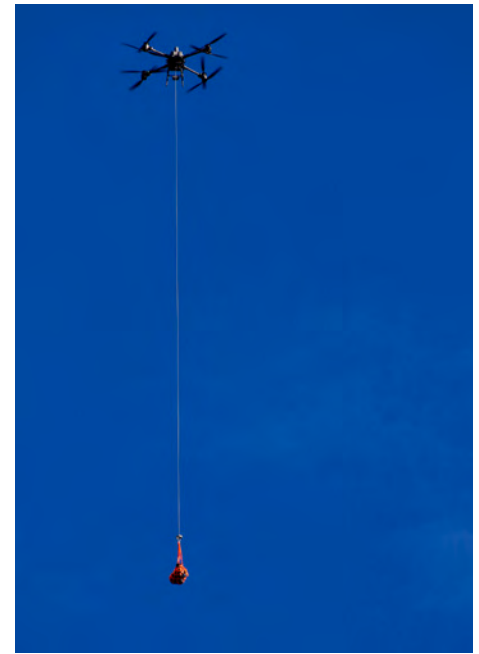
Post-fire and windthrow salvage is another area where Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) make a measurable difference. Overhead imagery and low-level video help supervisors see snag clusters, root-plate instability and unburned fuel pockets before anyone steps foot. Thermal cameras can spot residual heat, guiding where crews should and should not work. Even a quick, low altitude scouting flight can refine the day's plan: where to park, where to punch in, where to start and where to

set up exclusion zones. That sort of decision-support is safety in practice—less wandering and fewer surprises.

Compliance matters, because “safe” and “legal” are inseparable. In Canada, forestry drone operations are governed by Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs) Part IX. Most field tasks happen within visual line of sight, which means the pilot (and, ideally, an assistant visual observer) keep the aircraft in continuous unaided view while managing air and ground risks. Beyond visual line of sight requires special authorization and additional mitigations. Crews should treat flight planning like any other critical risk control: confirm airspace and altitude limits; identify nearby helipad, floatplane or rotary-wing activity; set geofences and lost-link actions; and anchor operations to a written safe work procedure that fits the site.

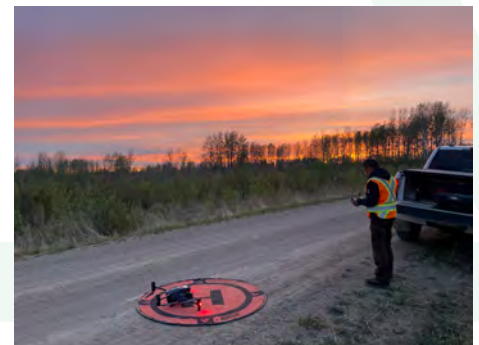
Bringing drones into existing safety systems is straightforward if you use the roles and checklists people already understand. A pilot in command is responsible for the aircraft and the decision to launch or abort. A visual observer watches airspace, keeps the crew honest about distance and altitude and helps with radio calls. The project lead ties drone tasks to the job hazard assessment: why the flight is needed, what risk it reduces, where the no-go areas are and how information will be shared with the crew. A five-minute tailgate discussing weather, winds, terrain traps, air traffic, abort criteria turns a handy gadget into a controlled activity.

Good habits prevent common incidents. Batteries lose performance in cold and heat; keep them conditioned and set conservative



reserves for climbs and headwinds. Propellers are consumables; inspect and replace them before they demand to be replaced. Forestry sites are RF-noisy—trucks, radios, metal and trees—so choose launch points with solid GPS and link quality and avoid flying behind ridges or dense stems that can shadow the control link. Smoke, ash and precipitation degrade both sensors and human judgement; if visibility would stop a manned aircraft, it should stop a small one too.

Drones also change how we communicate risk. Live video to a tablet lets supervisors and fallers look at the same hazard from the same angle before anyone moves. Quick orthomosaics produced between coffee and lunch can mark danger trees and travel lanes on a map that every crew leader carries. Simple photos taken as-built guyline anchors, blocks, anchors and crossings become reliable records for close-out and



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Harvesting Safety

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future audits. None of this is about collecting “cool data.” It’s about removing debate when time and terrain are working against you.



Finally, success comes from keeping drone work humble and useful. Start with a short list of high-value tasks—line placement, hazard scouting, landing-zone checks, water-source recon—and build repeatable routines around them. Choose aircraft that are simple to maintain and easy to see against the canopy. Train more than one person so vacations and wildfire season don’t halt the program. And measure what matters: minutes averted on slope, fewer slips and trips during layout, fewer unplanned entries into high-risk pockets. If the numbers move, the culture follows.

Forestry will never be risk-free, but it can be smarter about where risks live. Drones, used within the rules and inside a strong safety system, are one more way to keep feet out of bad ground and eyes on the right problems. That’s a practical definition of safer work and one crew’s can feel by the end of the shift. 🌲

18th Annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference Highlights

The 18th Annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) took place on Saturday, November 1, 2025, in Nanaimo, BC, welcoming 300 forestry professionals from across the province. This year’s theme, **“Facing the Future Together: The Human Side of Safety”** featured three keynote speakers and several industry presentations that were aimed at enhancing and improving safety practices in the forestry sector to help us all meet our collective goal of **every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.**

Steve Howe was the first keynote speaker delivering a raw and inspiring message about the real-life consequences of workplace safety decisions. In his presentation, “Workplace Safety: What’s Your Why,” Steve shared his personal story of surviving a catastrophic logging accident and walked us through the physical, emotional and personal impacts that not only affected him but also his family and friends. Through vulnerability and powerful storytelling, Steve challenged leaders to recognise their influence, encouraged workers to find their personal “why,” and urged everyone to believe that working injury-free is possible.

His message was clear: safety isn’t just about compliance; it’s about protecting what matters most. He reminded us that every choice we make creates ripples and we all have the power to choose the right path. We just need to trust our instincts and have the courage to act on them.

The next keynote speaker was **Sylvia Marusyk** who delivered a lively and insightful keynote called “Surviving the Thriving: A Guide to Self-health” which explored how mental health directly impacts workplace safety.



With humor and science, she explained how chronic stress affects brain function, decision-making and hazard awareness and if it goes unaddressed, it can put workers at great risk of injury.

Her core message was “your issues live in your tissues” meaning mental and physical health are deeply connected and if stress is allowed to build up, it won’t just affect performance, it will directly impact safety. Sylvia shared practical tools for calming the nervous system and gave us tools on how to build empathy in workplace teams to help create safer and healthier workplaces.

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Her talk offered a fresh perspective on safety, reminding us that when we take care of our mental health, we protect ourselves and those around us.

Justin Brien closed the conference with a powerful and emotional keynote, sharing his personal journey through depression, addiction and recovery. From years of struggling in silence to finding purpose and rebuilding his life, Justin's story highlighted the importance of asking for help, finding your "why," and doing the inner work to heal.

He spoke openly about the impact of untreated mental health and substance use and how small daily choices, like journaling, gratitude and self-compassion, can lead to big changes. His message was clear: recovery is possible and no one has to go through it alone.

Throughout the day, additional presentations reinforced how leadership, inclusion and collaboration are essential to building safer, stronger workplaces in forestry. **Chief Councillor John Jack, from the Huu-ay-aht First Nations**, spoke about integrating Indigenous values, respect, interconnectedness and care for future generations into safety and business practices to support long-term community resilience and economic sustainability. **D'Arcy Henderson of Mosaic Forest Management** called for a shift from reactive safety to a proactive culture where safety is a shared value across all levels of an organization. **Elise Kobylanski and Colleen Skinner from WorkSafeBC** offered practical guidance on return-to-work obligations, emphasizing the importance of early communication and collaboration. **Marla Guldbransen (BCFSC) and Nicole Arkle (Gorman Group)** highlighted how diversity, equity and inclusion are not just values, they're smart workforce strategies that strengthen teams and improve safety. Together, these insights reminded us that safety, respect and resilience must be at the heart of how we work and grow as an industry.

The VISC Steering Committee extends its thanks to all volunteers and sponsors who made this conference possible. A comprehensive conference wrap-up will be available on the BCFSC website in early December. 🌲



SAVE THE DATE:

VISC 2026

Saturday, October 17th

**at the Vancouver Island
Conference Centre**

Celebrating the 2025 Leadership in Safety Award Winners

Each year, the BC Forest Safety Council honours individuals who go above and beyond to make forestry safer for everyone. Since 2008, the Leadership in Safety Awards have recognised outstanding contributions in three key areas: harvesting, manufacturing and lifetime achievement.

These awards honour people who lead by example—those who bring fresh ideas, foster a strong safety culture and consistently put the well-being of others first. This year's recipients carry on that tradition with inspiring dedication, hands-on leadership and a deep commitment to safety across BC's forest sector.

Award Categories

- **Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award**

Presented to someone who has shown a long-standing commitment to improving safety awareness, expanding safety knowledge and building a lasting culture of safety in the forestry industry.

- **Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP)**

Recognizes an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to safety in forest harvesting operations—whether through innovative ideas, strong leadership or consistent efforts to improve workplace safety.

- **Manufacturing Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP)**

Honours an individual or team who has made a notable impact on safety in wood products manufacturing, demonstrating leadership and initiative in creating safer work environments.

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2025 Award Recipients

Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award

Recipient: Bjarne Nielsen – Bear Safety Services Ltd.

Bjarne Nielsen has spent more than 25 years improving safety in BC's forestry industry, including 18 years as a WorkSafeBC Prevention Officer. As a Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP), Bjarne has worked tirelessly to prevent workplace accidents, mentor others and build a culture of safety that's grounded in respect and collaboration.

He's served as an instructor, auditor and programme developer and his influence has reached across the province. Known for his warmth, integrity and unwavering commitment, Bjarne has helped countless individuals and organisations elevate their safety practices. His legacy is one of compassion, knowledge and action—and this award is a tribute to the lives he's impacted and the future he's helped shape.

Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

Recipient: Dale Jones – Operations Superintendent, Tolko Industries Ltd – Heffley Creek

Dale Jones is being recognised for more than 30 years of leadership in forest safety. As Operations Superintendent at Tolko's Heffley Creek division, Dale brings a practical, common-sense approach to safety that resonates with crews and colleagues alike.

He's known for his calm, honest communication and his ability to foster a culture where safety is part of everyday thinking. Dale's influence extends well beyond his own team, inspiring others across the company to take ownership of safety and continuously improve. This award celebrates his lasting impact and the example he sets for others in the industry.

Manufacturing Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

Recipient: Shane Norbury – Red Seal Millwright, Western Forest Products – Chemainus Sawmill Division

Shane Norbury has been a driving force behind safety improvements at the Chemainus Sawmill. As a Red Seal Millwright and long-time member of the site's safety committee, Shane leads by example—always putting the well-being of his coworkers first.

From spearheading safety initiatives to ensuring workstations are safe and ergonomic, Shane's hands-on approach and attention to detail have made a real difference. His approachable nature and commitment to shared responsibility have helped build a strong safety culture at the mill. This award recognizes Shane's dedication and the positive impact he's had on his workplace.

Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients! Your leadership, care and commitment continue to make BC's forestry industry safer and stronger.

Want to recognise a safety leader in your organisation?

Nominations for the 2026 Leadership in Safety Awards open on January 12, 2026. Visit our website to learn more about how to nominate someone who's making a difference in forest safety. 🌲



WorkSafeBC Updates:

2026 Research Competitions Are Now Open

WorkSafeBC's Research Grants Program is now accepting applications for its 2026 research competitions. This program supports innovative research in occupational health and safety and work disability to provide insight and solutions for issues faced by workers, employers, the workplace and WorkSafeBC.

If you have a research idea that could help improve workplace health and safety, submit your idea for consideration through one of WorkSafeBC's research awards.

Visit [WorkSafeBC Research Services](#) to learn more. 📄

Ergonomics Day Webinar Recap

On October 16, 2025, WorkSafeBC hosted an *Ergonomics Day* webinar, highlighting innovative approaches to workplace health and safety. The event featured engaging presentations, including UBC's Journey to Success with Abby Overduin and Kate Allan, a session on Participatory Ergonomics at K-Line Trailers that explored the "challenges of your job" approach, and Ergonomics is Evolving: How Tech & AI Impact Practice with Will Thomas from the Manufacturing Safety Alliance.

To learn more about ergonomics in the workplace and access free resources, visit WorkSafeBC's [Ergonomics page](#) or contact WorkSafeBC's Human Factors team at humanfactors@worksafebc.com. 📄

Employers in BC are required to support workers' injury claims

Under the *Workers Compensation Act*, employers must not discourage or prevent a worker from reporting a workplace injury or illness, filing or maintaining a compensation claim, or receiving compensation. [Understand your responsibilities as an employer](#) when workers are injured. 📄

Workplace Psychological Health and Safety

Managing psychological health and safety in the workplace is as important as managing physical health and safety.

Workplaces with a focus on both physical and psychological health and safety experience stronger employee engagement, greater productivity and decreased turnover. Workers experience less conflict and higher morale and are more committed to ensuring the health and safety of their workplace.

As an employer, it's your responsibility to address psychological health and safety and the factors that are within the control, responsibility or influence of the workplace.

Visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#) to learn how to spot, prevent and manage psychological hazards in the workplace. 📄

Manufacturing Safety and Serious Injury Reduction

October was Manufacturing month and WorkSafeBC focussed on drawing attention to manufacturing as a high-risk industry, and the need for employers to ensure health and safety systems are in place to protect workers. With a serious injury rate 44% higher than the BC average, manufacturing remains one of the province's higher-risk sectors.

"Preventing injuries in manufacturing requires more than awareness — employers need to proactively identify hazards and put controls in place to protect workers," said Todd McDonald, Head of Prevention Services at WorkSafeBC. "Involving workers in this process, and ensuring ongoing training and supervision, is also critical."

The most common types of incidents were overexertion, being struck by or against objects, falls on the same level and getting caught in machinery or equipment. Yet another key concern for manufacturers is combustible dust, which can pose serious explosion and fire hazards if not properly managed.

New occupational health and safety regulations for combustible dust are expected to take effect as early as 2026, and will require employers to test, assess and control dust hazards, reinforcing the importance of good housekeeping and hazard recognition.

WorkSafeBC Resources for Wood Products Manufacturing

[Sawmills](#)

[Shake and Shingle](#)

[Plywood and Panel Board](#)

[Value-added Wood Products](#) 📄

Policy Consultations and Public Hearings

Proposed Changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

[Part 8, Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment — Respirators: Face seal](#)

Feedback Submission Deadline – Friday, December 12, 2025 by 4:30pm

For more information visit [WorkSafeBC Public Hearings and Consultations](#). 📄



Work-Related Deaths & Injuries

Since our last publication, tragically another work-related death has occurred in the BC forestry industry, bringing the total to six lives lost in 2025. We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and our sympathies to all those affected by these tragic incidents.

FATALITIES

Injury: Fatal

Core Activity: Integrated forest management

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

On September 16th, a skidder was being operated on a steep slope in an area north of Revelstoke when the machine became unstable and rolled repeatedly about 400 feet down the slope. The operator succumbed to their injuries.

[Read the BCFSC Fatality Alert](#)

Recent work-related incidents reported to WorkSafeBC

The following is the list of work-related incidents recently reported to WorkSafeBC. We share these in the hope they may help prevent similar incidents from occurring in your workplace.

HARVESTING

Injury: Multiple injuries

Core Activity: Manual tree falling and bucking / Integrated forest management

Location: Vancouver Island/Coastal BC

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

A faller was trying to fall three limb-tied trees. The worker was completing the backcut on the final tree when a large piece of another tree fell on the worker.

Injury: Close call

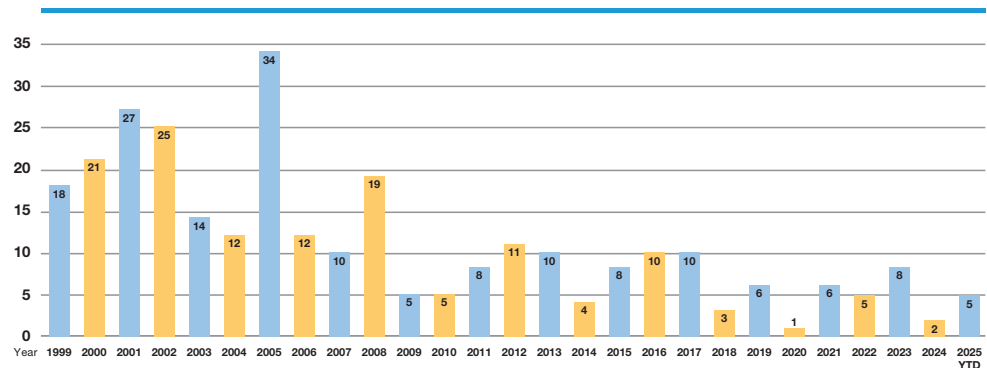
Core Activity: Integrated forest management

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

An unoccupied camp trailer in a row of trailers was engulfed in fire. The camp caretaker alerted nine other workers staying in the camp, and they were all able to safely evacuate to a muster point. Workers extinguished the fire and some spot fires that started in the adjacent timber. One trailer was destroyed and at least four others were significantly damaged. No injuries were reported.

WSBC Accepted Harvesting Work-related Death Claims



This information represents the number of harvesting work-related deaths by year in BC, up until November 2025.

Injury: Bruising (1 worker)

Core Activity: Logging road construction or maintenance

Location: Vancouver Island/Coastal BC

Date of Incident: Aug 2025

A worker was positioning an articulating rock truck to unload material on a beach. The liquefied sand gave way, and the truck fell into the lake. The worker escaped the cab, and the on-site dive team used their boat to assist the worker to shore.

Injury: Multiple injuries (3 workers)

Core Activity: Industrial camp operations / Manual tree falling and bucking / Helicopter logging

Location: Vancouver Island/Coastal BC

Date of Incident: Aug 2025

A crew boat with three workers on board ran into the shoreline.

Injury: Burns (1 worker)

Core Activity: Wooden component manufacture

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: Aug 2025

Smoke was observed coming from the top of a bunker of wood by-product. Workers used water hoses to begin suppressing the smouldering material. When the bottom of the bunker/hopper was opened for the fire department to identify and extinguish hot spots, a deflagration occurred, injuring one worker.

Injury: Injuries to foot

Core Activity: Sawmill / General trucking

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: Aug 2025

A lift truck was loading packages of wood onto the flatbed of a semi-truck when one of the lift truck's rear tires contacted a worker.

MANUFACTURING

Injury: Close call

Core Activity: Veneer or plywood manufacture

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

A fire occurred in a compressor room. The fire suppression system in the room activated to extinguish the fire. The fire department arrived shortly after. No injuries were reported.

Injury: Injuries to hand

Core Activity: Planing mill

Location: Lower Mainland

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

A worker was cutting wood with a foot-operated chop saw when some wood became stuck in the saw. The worker went to remove the stuck wood and inadvertently stepped on the foot-operated control, which activated the saw.

TRANSPORTATION

Injury: Bruises, contusions

Core Activity: Log hauling / Sawmill

Location: Interior BC

Date of Incident: Oct 2025

As a loaded truck left the wrapper removal station at a sawmill, one of the truck's front tires went over an edge. The truck rolled onto its side. The trailer attached to the truck remained upright. The driver was wearing a seat belt.

FORESTRY SERVICES

Injury: Minor injuries (4 workers)

Core Activity: Wildfire fighting

Location: Lower Mainland BC

Date of Incident: Sept 2025

A three-person firefighting crew and a helicopter pilot were responding to a wildfire inaccessible by road. As the helicopter was conducting a hover exit, an upset condition occurred, resulting in the helicopter crashing. 🚒



Terry Chow Retires After 14 Years of Dedicated Service

After 14 years of dedicated service, Terry Chow has officially retired from his role as Safety Advisor with the BC Forest Safety Council. Joining us in December 2011, Terry was our second longest-tenured Safety Advisor, bringing with him a wealth of experience from his time with multiple logging companies across the province and with the Ministry of Forests, where he worked as a Forester.

A Registered Professional Forester and Registered Agrologist, Terry shared his deep knowledge of the industry and brought a meticulous attention to detail which made him an invaluable part of our safety team.

Throughout his career, Terry had been a tireless advocate for worker safety. His thoroughness and professionalism helped shape our safety culture and practices in meaningful ways. He's also been a key member of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), where his input made a lasting impact for continuous safety improvements within the organization.

Beyond his professional contributions, Terry has been a wonderful colleague—always approachable, supportive and deeply committed to the work we do. He's married with three grown children and is now retired in Saanich where he is currently enjoying some well-earned time to travel and spend time with his family.

We're incredibly grateful for everything Terry brought to our organization. His legacy will continue to inspire us, and we wish him all the best in this next phase of life.

Congratulations, Terry—and thank you for everything. 🌲



FIRS Update: Enhancing Incident Reporting with EIDA

The EHS Incident Description Analyzer (EIDA) is the latest enhancement to the Forest Industry Reporting System (FIRS) aimed at improving the quality and consistency of incident reporting across the forest sector. EIDA helps users create more complete and detailed incident reports by guiding them through a simple, interactive process.

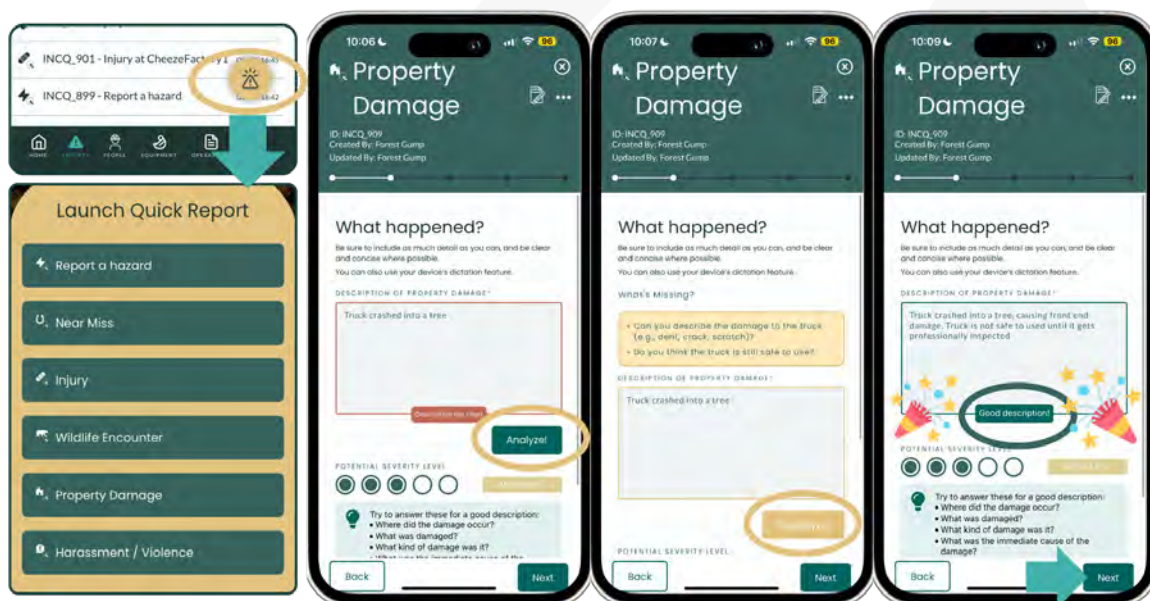
It uses advanced natural language processing to review incident descriptions and prompt users with targeted questions to ensure key details are included. Acting as a built-in coaching tool, EIDA encourages users to expand on their entries, resulting in clearer, higher-quality reports. Since its launch, FIRS users have seen a 65% increase in the average length of injury incident descriptions—highlighting the tool's effectiveness in improving data quality.

By helping users capture more accurate and comprehensive information, EIDA supports better investigations and contributes to a stronger safety culture across the industry.

How to Use EIDA in FIRS

EIDA is available on both the FIRS mobile app and desktop web version.

1. Start a quick report or create a full report.
2. Fill in the basic details and continue until you reach the “incident description” section.
3. Type your incident description in the box, then click the **“Analyze!”** button in the bottom right corner.
4. Respond to EIDA’s questions by adding your answers directly into the same text box.
5. Click **“Analyze!”** again and repeat the process until you see **“Good description!”**
6. Click **“Next”** to continue with your report.



By combining FIRS with EIDA, organisations can collect more accurate safety data, improve incident investigations and strengthen their overall safety culture. The more accurate and detailed the information provided, the better the insights that can be drawn to prevent future incidents. 🌟



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.



BCFSC Anatomy of a Tip-Over Workshop

By Dorian Dereshkevich, Manager, Transportation and Northern Safety

Timber harvesting operations across British Columbia continue to shift towards more challenging terrain and steeper slopes, making it increasingly difficult to safely and efficiently access fibre. The introduction of winch-assist harvest systems and advancements in specialized steep slope conventional ground-based equipment has helped reduce hazards and improve overall safety. However, operators and equipment are being pushed to their safe operating limits and there has been an increase in the number of tip-over incidents as a result.

Licensee-Initiated Training

Mosaic Forest Management (Mosaic) has emerged as an industry leader in addressing this issue and has developed an internal “Anatomy of a Tip-Over (AoT) Workshop” to raise awareness among frontline workers. The workshop focuses on the causes that contribute to tip-overs and strategies to prevent these types of incidents. The target audience includes equipment operators and supervisors, accompanied by licensee operations staff and senior layout engineers.

The workshops are designed to be interactive with participants encouraged to share their experiences and strategies for safely operating on steep slopes. To date, fifteen workshops have been delivered, and Mosaic has experienced a notable reduction in the number of tip-over incidents in their five-year data trend.



Expanding the Program

Mosaic has authorized the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) to use their AoT workshop materials to develop an industry-wide training and awareness initiative. The BCFSC AoT workshop materials are currently being developed with sessions planned for delivery in spring 2026. Building upon the success of the original Mosaic workshop program, the BCFSC training materials are being developed with a focus on:

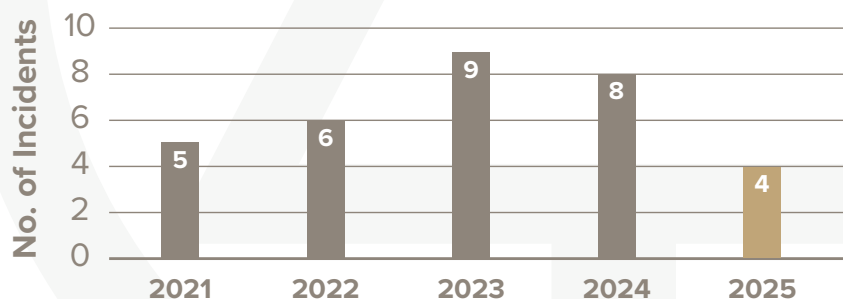
- Identifying contributing factors that lead to equipment tip-overs
- Hazard and risk assessment procedures
- Planning and layout standards

- Equipment and human limitations
- Best practices to prevent tip-over events

Workshops will be facilitated by an experienced operator who can relate to the challenges attendees face while performing their job duties. To encourage active engagement, workshop size will be capped at a maximum of 20 participants. Sessions are anticipated to run 3–4 hours, depending on the level of participant engagement.

If you are interested in hosting an AoT workshop session, please contact BCFSC Transportation Safety at transport.admin@bcforestsafe.org or call 250-562-3215. 📞

Mosaic Forest Management - Annual Equipment Tip-Over Incidents



Directional Winter Tire Basics:

All motorists in British Columbia should be aware that the Motor Vehicle Act and associated regulations require passenger vehicles to use winter tires from October 1 through April 30 on most highways throughout the province. To be compliant, passenger vehicles and light trucks must be equipped with tires that have the 3-peaked mountain and snowflake symbol or “M+S” on the sidewall.



Winter Tire Characteristics:

Winter tires are engineered to perform optimally in cold weather conditions providing enhanced safety and performance significantly improving traction, braking and handling compared to all-season tires. At temperatures below 7°C, all-season and summer tires begin to lose elasticity, leading to reduced traction, while winter tires maintain their elasticity and grip.

This increased performance is due to characteristics of winter tires such as, softer more flexible rubber compounds that remain pliable in freezing temperatures, deeper tread patterns and larger grooves designed to push snow and ice out of the tire tread and sipes (small slits in the tread) that enhance grip by increasing the tires surface area contact.

What is a Directional Winter Tire?

Directional tires are one of three main tire tread patterns (asymmetrical, directional and symmetrical) and are distinguished by their unique tread pattern that is designed to run optimally in one direction of travel.



This directional tire tread incorporates deep grooves and aggressively slanted or “V”-shaped channels that create a defined, arrow-like direction of rotation. This design aids in effectively pushing away slush, snow and water from the tire’s contact patch, ensuring that the tire maintains maximum contact and grip with the road surface resulting in better control and responsiveness, even in adverse weather conditions. This enhanced performance is a primary

reason why many tire manufacturers incorporate directional tread patterns into their dedicated winter/snow tires.

Mounting and Installation of Directional Tires.

The correct rotation of a directional tire can easily be identified by an arrow or other markings on the tire’s sidewall (Note: these markings only appear on one side of the tire). To maintain their performance and safety advantages, it’s crucial to mount them correctly, ensuring that all four tires rotate in the intended direction. When correctly mounted, the arrow points toward the front of the vehicle. Incorrectly mounted directional tires lead to reduced effectiveness, decreasing the tires hydroplaning resistance, handling and traction benefits.

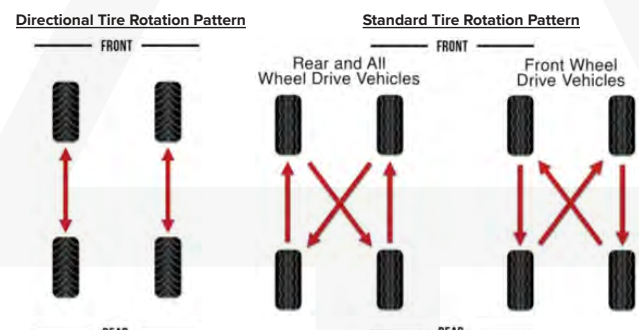


Directional Tire Rotation

Regular tire rotations should be a part of a vehicle maintenance schedule to help extend the life of the tires and even out wear experienced due to road conditions, driving patterns and different drivetrains. Always refer to the vehicle’s owner’s manual or tire manufacturer information for suggested rotation intervals. A suggested best practice is to rotate your tires approximately every 8,000km or six months.



Unlike other standard tires, directional tires can only be rotated front-to-back, not side-to-side. Failing to follow this procedure can lead to uneven wear, significantly reduce performance advantages and safe handling of the vehicle. If transferring directional tires to opposite sides of the vehicle is required for any reason, the tires must be taken off the rims, flipped and remounted.





Extreme Cold Events and Planning for Worker Safety

Winter officially begins December 21st, and with it brings plunging temperatures, snow, ice and frosty winds that can increase risks for workers. In addition to extremely cold temperatures, wet, cool conditions also pose a significant risk of cold stress and hypothermia.

Between 2013 and 2023, there were 167 accepted claims for short-term or long-term disability benefits for injuries related to cold stress in BC, including frostbite, hypothermia and abrasions. More work-related motor vehicle crashes occur in November, December and January than in any other three-month period.

To address the risk of cold stress, you need a plan that outlines the risks, who is at risk and the safe work practices and other control strategies you will use to keep workers safe. Communicate your plan to everyone in the workplace.

Use the information below to refine your plan (or start building one) for controlling these top four winter risks.

1. Cold Stress and Hypothermia

Cold stress, the inability to maintain core body temperature, can lead to frostbite and hypothermia, which can be life-threatening. Employees who work outside part or all the time are at risk. Your cold stress prevention program should include:

- Training on the hazards, health effects and prevention of cold-related illness. This includes safe work practices, rewarming procedures, proper clothing and personal protective equipment, how to recognize cold stress/frostbite and signs and symptoms of hypothermia.

Cold stress can lead to hypothermia. This is a gradual process. Because it happens slowly, workers may not realize they are in danger until it's too late. Feeling cold is the most important warning sign to note. If workers feel cold, their bodies are likely losing heat faster than they are producing it. Wet clothing can dramatically reduce the body's ability to retain heat.

There are three stages of hypothermia. Here are the key warning signs for each stage:

- Mild – Shivering, grogginess and confusion
- Moderate – Violent shivering, confusion, shallow breathing and slurred speech
- Severe – Loss of consciousness, little or no breathing, weak, irregular or nonexistent pulse

If you or someone you work with is suffering from hypothermia:

- Seek medical care

- Evaluate responsiveness and breathing
- Provide CPR if the worker is unresponsive and not breathing normally
- Quickly move out of the cold
- Remove wet clothing
- Warm with blankets, warm clothing and external heat sources
- Offer warm drinks (only if the person is alert and can swallow easily)
- Do not consume or give alcohol or caffeine
- In all but mild cases, contact 911 immediately

2. Frostbite

Even protected skin can be subject to frostbite. It's the most common injury resulting from exposure to severe cold and usually occurs on fingers, toes, nose, ears, cheeks and chin. If caught early, permanent damage can be prevented. If not, frostbite can lead to tissue death and amputation.

Symptoms:

- Redness or pain in a skin area
- White or greyish-yellow skin
- Skin that feels abnormally firm or waxy

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2. Frostbite

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Symptoms:

- Numbness
- Blisters
- Black, dead skin and tissue (gangrene) in severe cases
- Warm the frostbitten area in lukewarm water (35°C to 40°C) for 20 to 30 minutes only if medical care is delayed and there is no danger of the skin refreezing

If you suspect frostbite:

- Move to a warm place
- Remove wet clothing and constricting items
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible

3. Slips, Trips and Falls

Raise awareness of hazards related to slips, trips and falls through safety talks and other forms of communication. This includes recognizing and monitoring environmental conditions that increase risk (e.g. freeze-thaw cycles, freezing rain), and providing prevention tips such as wearing proper footwear (low heels, warm, waterproof and good traction) and using ice cleats.

4. Winter Driving

Communicate the following safety tips to everyone in the workplace who drives (not only those who drive for work):

- Use snow tires
- Use tire chains when necessary
- Slow down and adjust speed for weather and road conditions
- Check road and weather conditions before heading out
- Allow more time to reach your destination
- Keep a safe distance from other vehicles

- Carry winter survival gear including a blanket, first aid kit, non-perishable food (e.g. granola bars), water, matches, extra clothing and boots, shovel, flashlight, flares and booster cables
- Have a check-in system for staff working alone
- Reschedule trips if conditions are dangerous

Employers and workers are responsible for taking proactive steps as weather conditions change, including conducting regular risk assessments and implementing appropriate control measures. If you haven't already, it's time to put your workplace's Winter Safety Plan into action.

Resources

- [BCFSC Winter Safety Resources](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Winter Hazards](#) 🚧





MAG Members Collaborate on Inclusion, Safety & Culture and Tour Tolko Heffley Creek Plywood Mill

In September, the MAG members gathered in Kamloops BC, for their quarterly meeting and workshop. Following the session, the group had the opportunity to tour Tolko's Heffley Creek plywood mill.

During the tour, members saw firsthand how raw logs are transformed into finished plywood products. The tour also included a chance to watch the production of veneer and peeler cores, as well as the creation of wood chips for further use. The visit also showcased Tolko's safety protocols and operational efficiency, offering valuable insight into both the technology and teamwork that are part of their plywood manufacturing operation.

MAG would like to extend their gratitude to Tolko for sharing their on-site safety initiatives and providing a behind-the-scenes look at their plywood operations. 🌲



Forestry Together – Inclusion, Safety & Culture Pilot Workshop – June MAG Workshop

On September 3, 2025, Forestry Together hosted the pilot MAG Workshop on Inclusion, Safety and Culture—an initiative designed to promote psychological safety and inclusivity across the forest sector.

Forestry Together is a collaborative alliance that brings together industry leaders, educational institutions, Indigenous organizations and advocacy groups to share resources and tackle common challenges. The workshop built on MAG's tradition of sharing safety tools and encouraged

participants to co-create practical solutions for improving workplace culture.

The session highlighted how inclusion and psychological safety can positively enhance safety outcomes, employee retention, performance and overall company reputation. Participants worked through real-world scenarios that revealed common barriers to inclusion, such as cultural insensitivity, workplace harassment, injury reporting stigma and gender-based exclusion. These scenarios sparked meaningful

discussions and generated actionable strategies that crews and companies can start using right away.

Breakout sessions gave attendees the chance to dive more deeply into each scenario. Working in small groups encouraged close collaboration and meaningful discussion, with teams sharing their insights back with the larger group. This was the first time the workshop used this format, and it was highly effective. Based on its success, the close-knit group sessions will be

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used in future workshop sessions to support shared learning and help build upon a more inclusive, safe and resilient manufacturing workforce.

If your company is interested in hosting a future workshop, reach out to Forestry Together to learn more. Resources and continued learning opportunities are available through [Forestry Together's](#) website and on LinkedIn. 🌲



ILMA Convention 2025 Highlights: Rethinking Forest Management in British Columbia

The BC Forest Safety Council was proud to take part in this year's Independent Lumber Manufacturers' Association (ILMA) Convention, held September 15–17, 2025 at Spirit Ridge Resort in Osoyoos, BC. The three-day event focused on the future of forest management and the challenges facing BC's Forest sector. It brought together industry leaders, government representatives and forestry experts to discuss topics related to the 2025 theme: *"The Land, The Law & The Flame: Rethinking Forest Management in BC."*

BCFSC was thrilled to connect with attendees at our booth, where we showcased a variety of free safety resources—including QR code sheets for Harvesting, SAFE Companies, Falling, Manufacturing and Training. Visitors also got a hands-on look at the new FIRS app and its powerful features designed to support safety documentation and reporting for SAFE Certification Audit submission.

If you're planning to attend any forestry conferences in the coming year, be sure to stop by and say hello! We're always happy to share tools, answer questions and offer some great swag. Think of us as your go-to resource for forest safety. 🌲



BCFSC's Tammy Carruthers at the ILMA Conference



Change Fatigue: Understanding and Managing a Quiet Crisis

In British Columbia's forest industry, contractors are facing a growing and often overlooked challenge: change fatigue. This emotional, mental and physical exhaustion builds up when individuals or teams are exposed to frequent, ongoing and often unpredictable changes. Though not always visible (the "quiet" part), the cumulative toll of climate events, policy shifts, market instability, staff shortages and evolving land use expectations, is quietly eroding resilience and capacity across the sector.

B.C.'s forests have always been shaped by natural cycles and economic forces. More recently, however, wildfires, prolonged droughts, tenure reallocations, shrinking timber supply and unpredictable duties and tariffs have intensified, reshaping how and when work gets done. These disruptions increasingly delay access to cut blocks, heighten safety risks and force tough decisions about scaling back or diversifying.

The Impact on Small Companies

For smaller operations, these pressures can hit harder. There is no HR department to manage the fallout, no legal team to interpret new agreements. It's just you, your crew and the pressure to adapt.

The relentless pace of change isn't just a professional challenge, it's deeply personal. When you're responsible for both the livelihood of your crew and the survival of your business, every disruption carries weight. Whether it's a delayed contract, a new regulatory requirement or another season of unpredictable weather, the cumulative stress can be overwhelming.

Change fatigue in this context often shows up for companies and their crews as:

- **Low morale and burnout** – not just among workers, but also in owners who feel the pressure to stay optimistic and keep things moving.
- **Disengagement and resistance** – especially if new policies or expectations arrive without clear support or consultation.
- **Isolation and cynicism** – as owners feel increasingly disconnected from decision-makers and uncertain about the future.

- **Safety compromises** – when under pressure, decisions may be rushed and safety protocols skipped.

How is change fatigue showing up in your operation? Have you considered what you may be able to do to mitigate this for yourself and/or your crew?

Strategies to Manage and Prevent Change Fatigue

While external pressures like market shifts, regulatory updates or environmental conditions may be beyond your control, focus on what is within your reach:

Reconnect with Your Purpose

You're not just cutting timber. You're adapting, stewarding and leading through change. Remind yourself and your crew of the bigger picture. A strong sense of purpose can help you weather the toughest transitions.

Strengthen Crew Connection

Meeting face-to-face builds rapport, improves clarity and understanding and encourages open dialogue. For your operation, this could mean:

- Daily tailgate meetings at the landing to check in on morale and clarify expectations.
- Coffee chats at camp or during equipment maintenance breaks to build trust and open communication.

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Kim Miller Logging's breakfast team meeting

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- Letting your crew know it's okay to speak up by creating a safe space to ask questions, speak openly about challenges and share ideas.

You set the tone. If you're open and approachable, they will be too. This isn't just good leadership, it's essential for safety and morale.

Plan for Flexibility, Not Perfection

The best plans are the ones that adapt under pressure. Think in scenarios:

- What if the wildfire season starts early?
- What if timber access diminishes?
- What if regulation changes?
- What if timber prices drop again?
- What if I can't find enough trained operators?



Run through these possibilities with your team and plan for contingencies. Planning for contingencies helps everyone stay mentally prepared and ready to evolve.

Be Mindful of Social Media

When stress builds up, it's easy to get pulled into negative social media. Constant exposure to bad news, industry frustrations or online arguments can drain your energy and make things feel even heavier.

If you notice that scrolling is replacing time with family, outdoors or real rest, it's worth stepping back. Social media can be a powerful tool for connecting with peers, sharing solutions or finding inspiration; however, it needs to be used intentionally.

Prioritize what restores you, not what wears you down.

Invest in Personal Wellbeing

The physical and emotional demands of forestry work are real. Make wellbeing part of your routine:

- Talk openly about stress, fatigue and burnout.
- Encourage proper hydration, sleep and breaks.
- Share simple resources like wellness posters or BCFSC checklists.
- Let your crew know it's okay to ask for help. If you have access to an Employee and Family Assistance programme (EFAP), promote it.

Build Leadership Resilience

To lead effectively in challenging times, strengthen your foundation by:

- Connecting with peer networks or industry associations.
- Attending in person training or industry events.
- Sharing challenges and solutions with other contractors.

Leverage Safety and Communication

Strengthen team cohesion and adaptability by:

- Empowering crew members who demonstrate leadership in safety and communication.
- Integrating change fatigue awareness into existing safety training programs.
- Using tailgate meetings as a structured way to introduce operational changes gradually.
- Encouraging open dialogue during downtime in camp to surface concerns and solutions.
- Inviting visitors such as BCFSC Safety Advisors to provide fresh perspectives and support.

You're Not Alone

Change fatigue is a systemic challenge, not a personal failure. Small businesses bring unique strengths: adaptability, grit and deep community roots. Lean on your networks, talk to other contractors, mill owners, associations and forestry professionals. Reach out and share what's working or to ask for help. Visit the BCFSC Website for training and resource inspiration or contact our office to connect with your regional safety advisor.

The path forward isn't about doing more, it's about focusing on what matters and doing it together. 🌲



BC Forest Safety Training Solutions

BCFSC Training Options for You and Your Team

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Hand and Arm Vibration Syndrome

By Dr. Delia Roberts

Power tools are a mainstay for many who work in Forestry. They make the work easier, but unfortunately vibrations produced by these tools are transferred into the body where they can damage a number of tissues. Chronic vibration exposure is associated with the development of painful symptoms, known as Hand and Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). In this debilitating disease, damage to the nerves and blood vessels of the hand and arm lead to circulatory and neurological impairments, as well as increasing the risk of developing musculoskeletal injuries. Over time, the damage can become permanent and interfere with the ability to work and perform even the most basic tasks of daily life. Hence, it's very important to be aware of the symptoms so as to be able to identify them as early as possible, self-monitoring is critical to avoid HAVS.

It's estimated that about 10% of the Canadian workforce use hand-held power tools. The very strong association of chronic vibration exposure with HAVS suggests that there are between 72,000 and 144,000 cases of HAVS in Canada. Based on meta-analysis of the literature, the risk of developing HAVS has been reported as 4-5-fold more likely in workers exposed to hand and arm vibration. However, the actual number is unknown because identification of HAVS is complicated by a number of issues. Symptoms are generally under-reported because the main treatment for HAVS is to stop the vibration exposure, which can result in a loss of livelihood. Even if symptoms are reported, not all medical practitioners are up to date with how to diagnose HAVS. For

example, more recent research has shown that neurosensory symptoms appear with a 3-fold shorter exposure period than the more commonly assessed vascular symptoms. Newly developed tests for biomarkers show promise but are not generally used. It is thought that as many as 50% of workers exposed to vibrations on a regular basis will develop the disease within 2 years, however, there are no available accounts of how many cases of HAVS actually occur in forestry in BC or elsewhere. British Columbia is one of the few provinces that has specific limits for vibration exposure and WorkSafeBC has accepted HAVS cases for compensation, but there is no separate reporting category for this disease.

The factors that contribute to the development of HAVS include the magnitude and character of the exposure. Frequency, amplitude, direction and duration (both total duration and bursts of exposure without changing grip, body position or a momentary break) are important and charts like this one below are available to help evaluate the risk.

Exposure Points Ready-Reckoner (from Control of Vibration at Work Regulations)

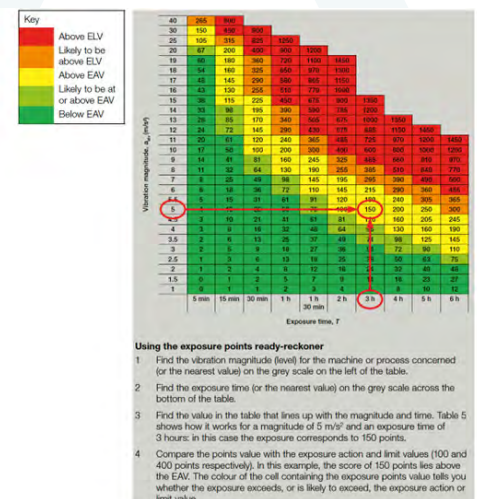
2005, Health and Safety Executive, UK. [Published by TSO Online.](#)

However, even the assessment of vibration is complicated. Manufacturers of tools are required to report the level of vibration produced by the tool, but this is only an indication of what will be experienced during use. There is no gold standard method for vibration measurement and there are problems with the accuracy of all the available methods. In addition, the vibrations



associated with any given tool change based on the conditions of use, like the density of the material being worked with and the age and maintenance status of the tool to name a few. Transfer of the vibrations generated by the tool into the body can be affected by the material interface. Wraps and gloves, damping surfaces and similar strategies have been employed to try and lower exposure. Unfortunately, many of these approaches have not been successful and in some cases can even increase vibration exposure. Anything that changes the gripping surface of the tool can alter how hard the tool must be held. The tighter the grip is, the more vibration is transferred into the body. A tight grip also restricts blood flow and compresses tissues, so the damage resultant from the vibration is increased. This is particularly problematic for outdoor workers, where cold and wet conditions further reduce blood flow to the hands. Body posture also contributes to the risk of developing HAVS. When muscles, ligaments and tendons are already under load,

Continued on page 32...



exposure to vibration seems to cause more damage. Individual variance is also a factor; some people seem to be more sensitive to vibration exposure.

The symptoms of HAVS can appear within weeks to years of vibration exposure. They usually begin slowly; those working with power tools should be alert for any tingling or prickling or 'pins and needles' sensations in their hands. These are symptoms of nerve damage. Another early sign is a whitening of one or two fingertips, which is what leads to HAVS having been known historically as White-finger Disease. Eventually, this blanching can progress to include all the fingers and reach all the way down to their bases which indicates damage to the small blood vessels. When blood flow returns to the whitened areas the tissues can flush and become very painful. In fact, HAVS is associated with a 7-fold greater increase in the risk of developing Raynaud's Phenomenon, a painful disease where blood flow to the fingers is intermittently reduced. Over time there may be numbness with a loss of sensation to touch and a weakening of grip strength. There is also an increased risk of developing carpal tunnel syndrome, approximately 1/3 of HAVS cases experience this painful wrist condition. Vibration exposure can also cause damage to tissues beyond the upper extremity. Reports have been made of increased risk of circulatory and neurosensory problems in the feet of those chronically exposed to vibrations. In addition, the combination of noise and vibrations appears to increase the damage caused by either of these two occupational hazards alone.

There are ways that you can reduce your risk of developing HAVS. First and foremost, be aware of the signs and symptoms and speak to your health care provider immediately if they develop. Remember that if HAVS proceeds the damage to the nerves and blood vessels of your hand and arm will result in permanent disability. However, if adjustments are made

immediately upon the appearance of symptoms, you may be able to continue working without problems.

- Adjusting your grip and posture frequently can help, even short breaks to allow blood to circulate and to unload the nerves and tissues to relax are a good idea.
- Wriggle your fingers and shake out your hands and arms to help increase blood flow whenever possible.
- Keep your power tool in good working order, cleaning, sharpening, lubricating and inspecting for damage frequently. The more efficiently it functions the less force will be required to complete the job, and the less pressure will be required by your hands and arms.
- For similar reasons, use good postures and the best possible ergonomics. HAVS increases the risk of developing musculoskeletal injuries so there are several reasons to take the time to position your body as best as possible. Again, good body positioning will decrease the strength that you have to exert with your hands and arms, helping to maintain blood flow and reduce the stress on your joints and connective tissues.
- When purchasing a new tool, look for those with lower vibration characteristics and good ergonomic design.
- For older devices, there are a number of different ISO 10819 standard anti-vibration gloves and wraps on the market and they may be worth trying. Make sure that the fit is very good and that they do not end up increasing the amount of force required to grip and handle your device. It's also important that the glove or wrap has been tested with your specific device because research has shown that the materials used for damping vibrations can resonate at some vibration frequencies and directions of vibration and actually result in increased exposure to

lower frequency vibrations. It is these lower frequency vibrations which are the ones that are the most damaging. WorkSafe BC has done some testing in this area and may be able to provide assistance in determining whether any of these products are helpful to you.

- Maintain good body temperature and consider battery powered warming gloves during colder seasons, but again, they must allow a good enough level of dexterity that you can manage your tool without increasing how hard you have to grip.
- One very promising development is the use of vibration-damping carbon-fibre composites in aftermarket handles. A project is currently underway in BC to test this approach for several commonly used chainsaws.
- Another thing that you can do to reduce your risk of developing HAVS is to stop smoking, vaping or chewing tobacco. All of these habits increase the risk of damage to the small blood vessels throughout the body.

If you work with power tools it is essential that you self-monitor for any whitening of your fingers or tingling and numbness in your hands. Ignoring these early indicators of HAVS can lead to permanent damage and significant loss of function. Get into the habit of taking micro-breaks to shift position, relax your grip and let your tissues recover. It might take a few minutes longer to complete your task but it can keep you working in the long term.

For more information and to access free HAVS Awareness Posters:

- [Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease](#)
- [Government of BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) 



Kid's Corner



Thanks to everyone who entered our September Colouring Contest. Congratulations to **Heidi, age 5**, who was picked from our random draw. Heidi wins a toy chainsaw, and we will be sending a special gift to everyone else just for entering!



For our winter issue, pair up the gloves and find the odd one out. Then colour the page or send us a picture of your own winter artwork and you'll be entered to win a toy chainsaw of your very own. Ask an adult to email us a photo of your artwork with your first name and age and we'll put your name into the draw.

How to Enter:

- Pair up the gloves and find the odd one out then colour the picture. Or send us your own drawing.
- Have an adult take a picture of your artwork and email it with your name, age and your mom/dad's email address to editor@bcforestsafesafe.org
- Submit your entry by 4pm, Friday, February 6, 2026.
- Kids aged 3 – 12 are eligible.
- All entries will be put into a random draw to win the toy chainsaw. The winner will be contacted via their parent's email address and the winning entry will be featured in the March 2026 issue of the Forest Safety News. 🌲



Can you find the glove that has no pair?



ANSWER: 5 (1-8, 2-7, 3-6, 4-10, 9-11).

ABOUT Forest Safety News

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Forest Safety News Editor
Unit 8C - 2220 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, BC V9S 1H9

Call 1-877-741-1060 or email editor@bcforestsafesafe.org



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