FOREST SAFETY NEWS

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Navigating Change. Strengthening Safety.

By Cherie Whelan, CEO, BCFSC

As we look ahead to 2027, BC's forest industry continues to face uncertainty. Market instability, fibre constraints, rising costs, mill closures and changing forest management priorities are creating significant pressures across the sector. At the same time, wildfire risks, changing environmental conditions and evolving approaches to forest management are influencing not only where we work, but how that work gets done.

Despite these challenges, I remain optimistic about our industry's ability to adapt and move forward. We have a long history of working together to address difficult issues, and I believe that same commitment to collaboration will be essential as we navigate what lies ahead.

The forest is changing, and so is the work.

As we see greater emphasis on wildfire resilience, fuel management, partial cutting, thinning and salvage operations, we need to understand the changing risks these activities present. Remote and isolated work, access management and emergency response capabilities will become increasingly important. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the persistent risks associated with falling, log hauling, manufacturing and other high-risk activities.

The BC Forest Safety Council's (BCFSC's) direction for 2027 is grounded in three priorities:

1. Continue what matters
2. Strengthen existing gaps
3. Anticipate new risks

This means building on our core programs while focusing on practical improvements that respond to industry's needs. Strengthening supervisor development, improving access to training and resources, supporting small employers, advancing technology and innovation and working with partners to address challenges such as remote emergency response are among the areas where we intend to focus our efforts.

But improving safety isn't just about programs, training or technology. It's also about how we learn from one another.

One area I am particularly passionate about is encouraging greater sharing of incidents and near misses across our industry. Every incident and near miss provides an opportunity to learn, yet too often, many valuable lessons remain within the workplace where they occurred. Sharing these experiences helps everyone learn and may prevent someone else from being seriously injured or killed and it can be shared confidentially without including identifiable details, helping protect privacy while still supporting learning.

I've often referred to near-miss reports as *gifts*. They give us an opportunity to identify risks and make improvements before someone gets hurt. But for people to continue sharing, they need to know their concerns will be heard, followed up on and acted upon. When we treat reporting as a gift rather than a problem, we build confidence that speaking up makes a difference.

So, my ask to everyone across our industry is simple: **please report and share your incidents and near misses.** Not to assign blame, but to better understand what happened, the conditions that contributed and what we can learn to prevent it from happening again.

Creating that kind of learning culture requires trust.

A quote that resonates with me is, *"Leadership is about influencing behavior, not demanding compliance. And you can't have influence without trust, communication and collaboration."*

I believe that applies as much to our work at BCFSC as it does to leadership throughout the industry. Meaningful change and continuous improvement cannot simply be directed or mandated. They come from listening, understanding the realities workers and employers face, and working together to find better ways forward.

There is tremendous knowledge, experience and commitment across our industry. By sharing what we learn, strengthening our partnerships and remaining open to new approaches, I believe we can continue to make meaningful progress, even in uncertain times.

Our collective goal remains unchanged: to see every forestry worker goes home safe. Every day.

Achieving that goal will take all of us, and I look forward to the work ahead.

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@bcforestsafe.org** or call **1-877-741-1060**.

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What's New

Here is the latest on what we have to offer since September 2026. 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.

Connection to Care – This mental health assistance program is a FREE, anonymous and confidential phone service designed to support forestry workers across British Columbia. **Call 778-247-2273 (CARE), Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm (Pacific Time)** to speak with a trained mental health professional.

Medical Emergency Response Program – BCFSC is leading a sector-wide medical emergency response initiative to help improve emergency preparedness and response in forestry operations. A Bowtie Risk Assessment workshop took place in November, and the outcome recommendations are expected in spring 2027.

Training Calendar – Plan your 2027 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 2027. 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@bcforestsafe.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 e-Newsletter, Health and Safety Enews, Young Worker Enews and more.
- **WorkSafe Magazine** – WorkSafeBC publishes *WorkSafe Magazine* six times a year to inform, inspire and provide practical tips on a range of topical occupational health and safety matters. It's free to subscribe and available online.
- **Tree Frog Foresty 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.

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BC **Forest Safety**

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

BCFSC Holiday Office Hours

Thursday, Dec 24	8am – 2:00pm
Friday, Dec 25	CLOSED
Monday, Dec 28	CLOSED (in lieu of Boxing Day)
Thursday, Dec 31	8am – 2:00pm
Friday, Jan 1	CLOSED
Monday, Jan 4 Regular hours resume	8am – 4:30pm

BCFSC offices in Nanaimo and Prince George will close at 2:00pm on Christmas Eve (December 24) and New Year's Eve (December 31).

Our physical offices will be closed between December 25 – January 1. Phone support will remain available during regular business hours (8:00am to 4:30pm) on December 29 and 30, and from 8:00am to 2:00pm on December 31.

As the year comes to a close, we'd like to thank everyone for their continued commitment to safety in BC's forestry sector. We appreciate the opportunity to support you and look forward to working together in 2027.

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

Industry Links

Road Safety at Work – visit Road Safety at Work for resources, webinars, workshops and news relating to road safety for you and your employees.

WorkSafeBC Announcements – check here for the latest information on WorkSafeBC policy and regulation updates, resource development, risk advisories and more.

Connection to Care Marks One Year of Service for BC Forestry Workers

It has been one year since we launched Connection to Care for BC forestry workers. Since then, more than 75 people around the province have accessed resources and therapeutic support through the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors.

Connection to Care is a free, confidential phone service available to anyone in forestry, anywhere in the province, no matter their role. Whether you work in silviculture, harvesting, log hauling, sawmills or wood pellet operations, this service is here for you. This program is especially helpful for those who may not have access to support through extended health benefits, an Employee and Family Assistance Program or a regular healthcare provider. You do not need to be in crisis to use this service—sometimes a conversation is all it takes.

Call 778-247-2273 (CARE) Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm (Pacific Time).



Important Notice: Service Holiday Closure

Connection to Care will be closed for the holidays on **Wednesday, December 23 through Friday, December 25, 2026**, and on **Friday, January 1, 2027**. Regular service will resume on **Monday, January 4, 2027**.

Please note that call-in services will not be available during these closure dates.

We recognize that mental health challenges and the need for support do not take a holiday. While Connection to Care will be temporarily unavailable, we encourage anyone who needs support during this time to access alternative resources.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis or requires immediate assistance, during these times, please call **911**, their local emergency services or contact the BC Crisis Line at **1-800-784-2433**.

2027 BC Forestry Conferences & Events

Start planning for 2027 and register for these upcoming forestry-related conferences.

Conference	2027 Dates	Location	Information & Registration
82nd Annual Truck Loggers Association (TLA) Convention	Jan. 13 - 15	Vancouver, BC	www.tla.ca
24th Annual BC Natural Resources Forum	Jan. 19 - 21	Prince George, BC	www.bcnaturalresourcesforum.com
2027 Western Forestry Contractors Association Conference & Trade Show	Jan. 27 - 29	Victoria, BC	www.wfca.ca
Forest Professionals of BC 2027 Conference & AGM	Feb. 3 – 5	Victoria, BC	www.fpbc.ca
2027 Council of Forest Industries (COFI) Convention	Apr. 7 - 9	Prince George, BC	www.cofi.org
69th Annual Interior Logging (ILA) Conference and AGM	May 6 - 8	Kamloops, BC	www.interiorlogging.org
2027 Interior Safety Conference	May 5	Kamloops, BC	www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/
2027 Indigenous Resource Opportunities Conference	June 8 - 10	Nanaimo, BC	www.bciroc.ca
2027 Vancouver Island Safety Conference – 20th Anniversary	Oct. 17	Nanaimo, BC	www.bcforestsafe.org/news-events/safety-conferences/





Celebrating the 2026 Leadership in Safety Award Winners



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

These awards recognize individuals whose commitment to safety extends beyond their day-to-day responsibilities. Through leadership, mentorship, collaboration and innovation, they have made a lasting impact on the people and organizations around them. This year's recipients represent the very best of BC forestry and demonstrate what can be achieved when safety is treated as a core value rather than simply a requirement.

Cary White Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award

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

2026 Recipient: Mike Milholm, retired WorkSafeBC

For more than two decades, Mike Milholm dedicated his career to advancing forestry safety in British Columbia. Known for his practical approach, extensive knowledge and commitment to collaboration, Mike earned the respect of workers, employers and safety professionals throughout the province. Throughout his career, he worked tirelessly to help organizations improve their safety performance and find solutions to complex workplace challenges.

Mike's contributions extended well beyond his professional role. As a member of the Vancouver Island Safety Conference Steering Committee for 18 years, he played an instrumental role in helping shape one of BC's most respected forestry safety events. Through mentorship, relationship building and a genuine commitment to helping others succeed, Mike has left a lasting legacy that continues to influence forestry safety today.

Forest Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

Recognizes an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to safety in forest harvesting and silviculture operations through leadership, innovation or sustained efforts to improve workplace safety.

2026 Recipient: Jordan Tesluk

Jordan Tesluk was recognized for his leadership and commitment to safety within the silviculture sector. Drawing on his own experience as a tree planter, Jordan has developed a practical understanding of the challenges faced by workers in the field and has dedicated his career to improving conditions for crews across Western Canada.

Through his work with forestry companies throughout BC and Alberta, Jordan has helped strengthen safety programs, support workers and develop practical solutions that address real-world challenges. His ability to connect with people, build trust and engage workers has made him a valued resource for employers, supervisors and crews alike. Through training, education and ongoing support, Jordan continues to make a meaningful difference in the safety and well-being of silviculture workers.

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Manufacturing Safety Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award

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

2026 Recipient: Scott Wynn, Landsong Heritage Consulting

Scott Wynn has made significant contributions to safety within BC's wood products manufacturing sector throughout his career. Known for his collaborative approach and commitment to continuous improvement, Scott has earned a reputation for bringing people together to share knowledge, solve problems and strengthen workplace safety.

Through leadership roles with Interfor, Tolko and Landsong Heritage Consulting, along with his involvement as former Chair of the Manufacturing Advisory Group, Scott has supported initiatives that provide practical tools, resources and training to manufacturing operations across the province. His willingness to share expertise, support others and champion learning has helped advance manufacturing safety and foster stronger safety cultures throughout the industry.

Congratulations to all of this year's recipients. Their leadership, dedication and commitment to protecting workers continue to strengthen BC's forestry industry and inspire others to make safety a priority every day.

Want to recognize a safety leader in your organization? Nominations for the 2027 Leadership in Safety Awards are now open. Individuals, crews, teams, contractors, companies, suppliers, consultants and trainers are all eligible to be nominated for their contributions to forestry safety. Visit the BCFSC website for nomination details and help recognize the people who are making a difference in forestry safety across BC.

19th Annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference Highlights

Over 250 forestry professionals attended the 19th Annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference (VISC) on Saturday, October 17, 2026, at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo, BC. This year's theme, *"Built to Last: Stronger Teams, Strengthening Safety,"* focused on the importance of collaboration, leadership and supporting one another to build safer, stronger workplaces across BC's forestry sector.

The day began with opening remarks from Cherie Whelan, CEO of the BC Forest Safety Council, who reminded attendees that safety starts with working together and encouraged everyone to share ideas and learn from one another. She stressed that open conversations and looking out for one another are at the heart of a strong safety culture.

The first keynote speaker, Paul Krismer, drew on the principles of positive psychology and explored how workplace culture influences safety performance, engagement and organizational success in his presentation, *Powerful Safety Cultures in the Mature Economy*. His core message was that strong safety cultures are built by investing in people and he encouraged leaders to focus on recognizing strengths, building trust and creating environments where employees feel valued and connected to their work.





Harvesting Safety

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The second keynote presentation featured Darcy Kulai and Dan McMillan, who delivered a powerful message about young worker safety. Darcy shared his personal story of a life-changing sawmill incident he experienced as a young worker and spoke candidly about the challenges he faced during his recovery. Together, Darcy and Dan highlighted the importance of worker orientation, mentorship, supervision and creating workplace cultures where people feel comfortable asking questions and raising concerns. Their presentation served as a powerful reminder that supporting young and new workers is everyone's responsibility.

The final keynote speaker, Mike Kay, brought more than four decades of emergency response experience to his presentation on emergency preparedness in BC forestry. Mike emphasized that emergency response plans must be living documents that are regularly reviewed, tested and updated. He challenged attendees to think beyond simply calling for help and consider what actions workers need to take during the critical minutes before professional medical responders arrive. His presentation reinforced the importance of planning, training, communication and preparedness for remote forestry operations.

Additional presentations highlighted emerging issues within the industry. Bill Laturnus provided an overview of upcoming combustible dust regulations and shared practical resources available to help manufacturing facilities prepare for implementation in 2027. Cherie Whelan and Marcy Boyd introduced the Connection to Care program, a free and confidential mental health support service available to forestry workers throughout BC. Their presentation reinforced the importance of recognizing psychological health as a critical component of workplace safety.

The VISC Steering Committee extends its sincere thanks to all volunteers, exhibitors and sponsors who helped make this free conference possible. Click here to download the 2026 conference wrap-up or visit the BCFSC website for details on next year's event.







SAVE THE DATE:

The 20th Annual Vancouver Island Safety Conference 2027 is Saturday, October 16, 2027.

Registration will open in July 2027.

WorkSafeBC News & Updates

Amendments to Respirator Face Seal Now in Effect

Amendments to Part 8 of BC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation related to respirator face seals came into effect on November 6, 2026. The changes clarify existing requirements and introduce consistent terminology for *tight-fitting respirators*. The amendments do not change existing health and safety requirements for using respirators.

Employers must continue to ensure respirators are properly selected, workers receive fit testing, user seal checks are completed before each use and nothing interferes with the respirator's seal or proper function. Workers are still required to participate in fit testing, perform seal checks and report any condition that could affect the respirator's fit.

WorkSafeBC has released several updated resources, including revised respiratory protection guidance, a new guideline on effective seals for tight-fitting respirators and updated respirator program templates.

Read the full update and access the new resources on the WorkSafeBC Respiratory Protection webpage.

Latest News Release: Slips, Trips and Falls Continue to Take a Significant Toll on BC Workplaces

Injuries due to slips, trips, and falls increase by 37% during the winter months. Slips, trips and falls on the same level account for nearly 7,000 accepted WorkSafeBC claims each year, representing about 12 per cent of all accepted claims. These injuries result in an average of 500,000 lost workdays and more than $200 million in annual claim costs. Tragically, between 2021 and 2025, 11 workers died due to falls on the same level.



Read the full details of this news release by clicking here and learn how you can help prevent injuries from these incidents.

Consultation on Proposed Amendments to Part 8 of the OHS Regulation

WorkSafeBC is requesting feedback on proposed amendments to Part 8, Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment — Standard of Fit. Feedback will be accepted online, or by email, or mail until 4:30pm on December 4, 2026. Visit WorkSafeBC for more information.

WorkSafe Magazine - Fall 2026 Issue

The latest issue of WorkSafe Magazine features several articles that are relevant to forestry employers. Take a few moments to read the articles below and see what might apply to your operations.

Policy notes: Preparing for regulatory updates

Several changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation will take effect in 2027. They are intended to improve workplace health and safety and clarify employer responsibilities.

Ask an officer: Training and orienting new and young workers

Every worker needs the knowledge and skills to do their job safely. That starts with effective orientation and training and continues through ongoing supervision and support. By investing in worker training, employers can help prevent injuries and create safer workplaces.

2024 Investigation Report Summary

WorkSafeBC has released the summary of an investigation report into a 2024 fatal forestry incident. Click here to access the report.

OHS Guidelines in Preliminary Posting

New and revised OHS guidelines are posted for a 60-day preliminary period during which time the stakeholder community can comment and request revisions. Feedback on the following will be accepted until 4:30pm on December 14, 2026.

G16.43 Lift trucks – Rotating telehandler standard and operator training

If you have questions or comments, please email regpraconsult@worksafebc.com.

BC Wildfire Service

Updated S-100 Training Standard and Endorsement Process

In February 2026, BC Wildfire Service announced an updated S-100 instructor endorsement process with new course materials. The updated S-100 Training Standard is a critical step toward providing clearer standards and oversight for all S-100 providers. The new standard outlines the minimum requirements for any training delivery called or referred to as the S-100 Basic Fire Suppression and Safety in BC. The standard also includes annual requirements to maintain certification currency.



S-100 instructors must be endorsed by completing the online application through Shift iQ. Endorsed instructors have access to updated course materials within the online Shift iQ portal.

The deadline is approaching to apply for endorsement. Previously endorsed S-100 instructors who have not yet completed the online application must do so by **January 1, 2027** to maintain their endorsement with BC Wildfire Service.

Instructors who have not completed the updated endorsement process by January 1, 2027 will no longer be recognized as endorsed S-100 instructors. **Any S-100 courses delivered after this date by instructors without a current BC Wildfire Service endorsement will not be recognized and certificates issued to participants will not be valid.**

If you have already applied and been endorsed through, you do not need to apply again. You will only need to complete the short annual re-endorsement questionnaire to maintain your endorsement.

Important reminders:

- The new S-100 includes the S-185 Fire Entrapment and Avoidance Safety content.
- To maintain S-100 certification individuals must complete the full S-100 course in person every five years as well as the S-100A (online or in person) annually.
- The S-100A content is also being updated to align with the updated S-100 materials and the new training standard and will be available soon.

For more information, visit the BC Wildfire Service S-100 Instructor web page.