



Worker Safety Post Wildfire

Wildfire events within woodlots and community forests are becoming more common. These events create new hazards within the effected stands and tenure area in general. This can impact all phases of forestry from planning to post harvest activities. Some of these hazards include; unstable trees, fallen debris, unstable ground, increased runoff, air quality, increased blowdown potential and post fire hot spots. The Woodlot License & Community Forest Agreement Safety Committee has developed key considerations when working on land that has been affected by wildfires.



Phase	Additional Considerations
Planning Phase	• Develop wind protocol to address blowdown hazards • Guide the development of harvest plans (and tree retention potential), consider undertaking a field review to assess general tree stability • Keep up to date on potential new restrictions, regulatory changes • Give extra consideration to slope stability, assess steep slopes that may have been compromised/unstable ground • Use extra caution during bid tours and all assessments as hazards are unknown • Consider clear cuts vs partial cuts to decrease the chance of reoccurring fires and/or blowdown

	• Determine potential access issues due to damaged roads/bridges/culverts • Determine the scale and intensity of the fire and if its fully out • Identify a refuge area for field crews to address risk during wind events • Consider widening road right of ways to remove trees that will be hazardous during operation
Development Phase	• Develop wind protocol to address blowdown hazards • Conduct a recce to determine if plans are viable & identify hazards • Use extra caution during general hazard assessment/ overall site assessment as hazards are unknown i.e. ground stability • Determine appropriate natural drainage as organics and infrastructure (i.e. culverts) may have been destroyed/damaged during the fires
Harvesting Phase	• Develop wind protocol to address blowdown hazards • Remove danger trees concurrently with harvesting. Trees planned for retention must meet Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment Protocol • Consider development of an air quality protocol to address ash and debris as well as hot spots still producing smoke, respirators might need to be worn • Limit hand falling as unstable trees and ground could affect safety • Assess ground stability due to compromised root bed and soils • Machine operators should use extra due diligence when navigating around trees, as a slight bump could cause them to fall
Post Harvesting Phase	• Develop wind protocol to address blowdown hazards • Consider development of an air quality protocol to address ash and debris as well as hot spots still producing smoke • Subsequent operations such as site prep, planting, brushing and spacing should be preceded by the removal of any dangerous trees. Trees planned for retention must meet Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment Protocol

Additional resources can be found at:

<https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/rsi/fsp/Misc/Misc071.pdf>

[Protecting workers from wildfire smoke and heat stress WorkSafeBC](#)

[WildfireSmokeHazards and-WorksiteSafety22-Jul-25FINAL.pdf](#)