

FATALITY ALERT

-- PRELIMINARY INFORMATION --

BCFSC # 2015-07-24 and 2014-07-27 Fatalities

On July 24th, a manual tree faller was struck by a tree and fatally injured in the Port McNeil area. On July 27th, a grapple skidder operator was struck by a log and fatally injured while working on a grapple yarding logging operation north of Revelstoke. WorkSafeBC and the Coroners Service are investigating both incidents and the results will be released as soon as possible.

These incidents are the 4th and 5th direct forestry fatalities¹ of 2015. The others are:

- A log truck driver rear ended another log truck on the Alaska Highway.
- Pickup truck driver at the side of a road was struck by another truck near Smithers.
- Faller struck by root wad/tree in North Coast area.

There have also been two associated fatalities² year to date:

- Low bed truck driver fatally injured while pulling fallen trees off road near Prince George.
- A tree faller was struck by a tree during a falling operation on a wildfire near Sechelt.

The industry has experienced a high rate of serious injuries in the last month. Now is the time to refocus our efforts in reducing all incidents. Hold a tailgate meeting with your crew and have an open conversation about what areas need improvement.

Although the details of these two recent incidents are still unknown, review the following general safety information:

1) Logging is high risk work and all operations must have a well understood communication procedure in place. There are many factors that can cause miscommunication: poor radio reception, rushing, distraction, complacency, and making assumptions are just a few. Ensure there is a plan for clear communication and confirmation of work to be done. Don't be afraid to ask for confirmation if the message is unclear.

2) On-the-ground workers are most at risk during logging operations. Reassess your work area and establish safe zones where ground workers are in the clear. Logs, rocks and debris travelling down a slope can deflect off stumps and change direction, even travel through standing timber, something to consider when establishing safe zones.

3) Ground workers working near logging equipment also need established safe work areas. Identify the hazard zones for each piece of equipment and make sure all workers are aware of how they can contact the equipment operator to move through these hazardous areas safely.

4) Gravity is a hazardous energy source that may not be easy to identify for logging operations, such as:

- Logs or rocks on a steep slope
- A suspended log or load that is left in the air
- Working near sharp drop offs or cliffs
- Equipment parked without lowering blades or attachments.

Ask “What If” questions to identify what may happen in these potentially dangerous situations.

5) Your communication procedures should include emergency signals. These signals can warn workers of hazardous conditions, emergency situations or the need to gather at the muster location.

1 Direct fatalities are to forestry workers as defined by WorkSafeBC Classification Units doing work for forestry operations.

2 Associated fatalities are those people who are not regular forestry workers, but are doing work (e.g. delivery) for a forestry company or people from a forestry background working for another industry sector using their forestry skills (e.g. falling for oil and gas). It also includes non-workers, for example someone driving on resource roads to a recreational place that has a fatal incident with a log truck.