

FATALITY ALERT

– PRELIMINARY INFORMATION –

BCFSC #2017-02-04

On February 4th, a faller was fatally injured when a tree uphill from where he was working uprooted and struck him. He was working in the Woods Lagoon area on the BC Coast.

Our condolences go out to the family and co-workers of the deceased.

The Coroners Service and WorkSafeBC are investigating this incident.

This is the 1st harvesting fatality of 2017. Please share the information below with the objective of preventing similar incidents at your operations.

Although the details of this incident are still unknown, review the following safety information:

- 1) Red and yellow cedars in rocky areas with shallow or wet soils are likely to be unstable. Cedars naturally have shallow roots and other characteristic hazards. Look on page 2 for a list of hazards for the common tree species.
- 2) Weather conditions can cause significant changes in ground conditions. Heavy rainfall can reduce soil strength which causes landslides and tree instability. Frequent freeze and thaw cycles can create ground instability and rockfall.
- 3) Overhead hazards are difficult to see and are often a cause of falling incidents. Take the time to assess the tree and look for hazards like limb tied trees and dead tops or branches.
- 4) Many falling incidents are the result of chain reactions. The tree being felled can cause unexpected movement in nearby trees, logs, rootwads or rocks. As part of the hazard assessment, anticipate what chain reactions may occur.

12 Tree Species Group Hazards

Group 1 – Douglas Fir, Larch, Pine, Spruce

- Dead tops indicate a structural weakness
- Cracked, decayed, broken or hung-up limbs
- Split or cracked trunk
- Fungal fruiting bodies indicate sap, heart or root rot
- Excessive lean
- Root pull or lifting root mat
- Sapwood can become brittle in old growth fir and larch
- Sloughing bark, i.e., Douglas fir



Group 2 – Western Red Cedar and Yellow Cedar

- Dead tops, i.e., candelabra or multi or single stem
- Dead multiple stems, i.e., widow makers, cracks or broken tops
- Hollow stems
- Structural damage, i.e., cracks, splits, scarring
- Burnt sections of stem from fire
- Loose slabs of sapwood on stem
- Tree lean due to wet soils, lifted root mat, shallow soils, steep slope, damage or root rot
- Brush growing on the tree stem, i.e., hides defects in the stem
- Brittle holding wood
- Internal cavities, i.e., bear dens
- Yellow cedar is prone to barberchair due to elastic holding wood
- Dead red cedar (grey ghosts) in wet climate have no root systems
- Old growth red cedar tends to have the weight balance near the base of the trunk

Group 3 – Hemlocks and True Firs (Balsam)

- Dead tops indicate a structural weakness
- Cracked, decayed, broken or hung-up limbs
- Split or cracked trunk
- Mistletoe infected trees can develop large and heavy brooms on the limbs
- Second growth sapwood has limited holding strength
- Prone to heart, sap and root rot indicated by fungal fruiting bodies

Group 4 – All Deciduous

- If frozen, prone to shatter
- Prone to sliding off the stump
- Prone to barberchair
- Dead multiple stems, i.e., widow makers, broken tops, cracks, hidden large hanging dead limbs
- Prone to split trunk, i.e., lightning strikes, frost and wind induced cracks
- Stem damage, i.e., butt rot, animal damage, machine and fire damage
- Butt and stem cankers, i.e., aspen, balsam poplar, paper birch, big-leaf maple, and red alder
- Large pieces of bark separated and sloughing from the stem
- Prone to heart rot and root rot
- Sapwood and heart wood is brittle

