

# Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS IN BC'S FOREST INDUSTRY

November 2017

## Working around Fire and Beetle Killed Trees

The record setting 2017 wildfire season has created over a million hectares of fire damaged forests in BC. In addition to this, mountain pine beetle killed stands are found across the interior of the province.

Being able to work safely in these damaged stands takes planning, site specific knowledge and clear instructions on when it's OK to work and when it's too hazardous. Some of the hazards to watch out for include **unstable trees, unstable ground, poor air quality, and increased blowdown.**

### Consider the following information when working in damaged stands:

- Trees with burnt or rotten root systems are more likely to blow down. Safe work procedures should include guidance on when it is too windy to be working in these areas. This link has more information on wind and overhead hazards: <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/node/2050>
- Regulations require that danger trees be removed or assessed for stability if there is a risk of the tree hitting a worker. These assessors must be qualified, for more information refer to the Wildlife/Danger Tree Assessment Protocols: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/wildlife-habitats/wildlife-tree-committee>
- Damaged soils and root systems can contribute to landslides and flooding. These risks are minimal in the winter but consider what may happen in the spring. The following site has valuable information on planning post fire operations: [http://www.forrex.org/sites/default/files/forrex\\_series/FS19.pdf](http://www.forrex.org/sites/default/files/forrex_series/FS19.pdf)
- Inspect roads, bridges and culverts to determine if wildfire damage has created access or safety issues. Consider widening road right of ways to remove danger trees.
- Logging operations should remove danger trees concurrently with harvesting. Machine operators should be careful when navigating around danger trees, as a slight bump could cause them to fall. Limit hand falling as unstable trees and ground could affect faller safety.

