

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

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

May 2018

Effective Communication Improves Safety

Consider the following radio transmission from a supervisor to a worker:

Hey (*radio static*) go down in the valley. The one with the S4 creek. There's something (*radio static*) going on down there.

What's the problem with this communication and what could go wrong?

If the transmission was clearer, the full transmission would be heard with a very different message:

Hey don't go down in the valley. The one with the S4 creek. There's something weird going on down there.



There are three key components of communications: 1) message 2) delivery and 3) reception. If one of those is missing, the communication will fail.

1) Building a Solid Message

- Some planning is helpful prior to sending your message. For radio communications, think about what you're going to say before you key the mic. For more complex communications like leading a safety tailgate meeting, make some notes to keep everything on track.
- Decide on the best way to deliver the message. Do you need to deliver it in person, will a text do or do you need to draw it out on a map? Safety critical or complicated messages should always be delivered face to face so that you can gauge understanding and answer any questions.

2) A Good Delivery

- Do you usually talk too much or not much at all? You may have to change your style to meet the needs of your audience. When in doubt, a short, simple message with a follow up check for understanding is a good practice. Current research says our average human attention span is all of eight seconds!

3) Message Received?

- Plan to communicate at the right time and place. Avoid noisy environments or when people will be too distracted, tired or hungry to receive the message.
- Watch your audience, are they paying attention? If not, try a different tactic. One-on-one communications may work better if you want to get a 2-way conversation going.
- Getting feedback from the person you are communicating with is important. Are they making eye contact, asking questions and engaging in the conversation? If they are, that's a good sign that they



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are receiving the message. For critical radio communications, have the person repeat the message back to you.

Situations That Require Safety Critical Communication

Cable Yarding Commands – whistles and radio commands

Radio communications on Resource Roads – calling kms and using pull outs

Emergency incidents – communicating what people and resources are required

Communication between falling partners – calls for qualified assistance

Logging equipment working in close proximity – communicating locations and staying out of hazard zones



Barriers to Communication

Here are some potential barriers to good communication that you may need to manage:

Fatigue

Stress

Literacy challenges

English as a 2nd Language

Distraction

Bullying

Hearing disabilities

Poor equipment

Jargon

Technical terms

Noise

Resources

1) Attend Forest Supervisor Communications Training

<https://www.bcforestsafef.org/training/supervisors/basic.html>

2) First Aid Drill Resources – ideas on how to practice emergency communications

https://www.bcforestsafef.org/innovations_first_aid_drills.html

3) How Loud Is It? Forestry specific hearing information

<https://www.worksafefbc.com/en/resources/health-safety/hazard-alerts/how-loud-is-it-forestry?lang=en>

