

Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

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

October 2017

New and Young Workers

Trevor was a faller trainee who had just finished his initial 30 days of training and he was pumped to start knocking down some trees. He had just been hired by a falling company with an excellent reputation. The first day on the job, the owner spent a few hours with him to explain his expectations and told him: "Don't worry about production, we want to see that you're falling each tree safely and then the production will come."

They paired him up with a 30 year faller, Greg, who seemed to be genuinely excited about showing him the ropes. Greg cautioned Trevor that there was still a lot to learn. "I am going to show you everything I know to keep you safe and do a good job."

Greg was a great mentor and kept Trevor working on the basic skills until he mastered them. He also started introducing more advanced skills as the company slowly moved him into more challenging terrain and timber types. Later on, Trevor was paired up with other experienced fallers to learn different skills and approaches to falling.

Trevor developed into a safe faller and a high producer thanks to the thoughtful approach of the company and mentors like Greg.

Employers have a great opportunity to set their new employees on the path of zero incidents. Here are some tips on how to do that with faller trainees and other new workers:

Faller Trainee Tips:

- Close supervision is necessary to provide guidance and training to build on the falling trainee's skills and knowledge. This is a great opportunity for the supervisor or trainer to create good, safe work habits.
- Faller trainees may not have the experience in identifying all the hazards. An experienced mentor can coach and help them spot what they've missed.
- Falling supervisors should work with faller trainees to confirm they have all the basics skills and knowledge before having them do more advanced falling.
- Start a faller trainee in terrain and timber types appropriate to their skill level before moving them into more challenging ground.
- Promote an attitude of not taking short cuts. Production pressures and rushing often negatively affect faller trainees who want to impress.



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- Document how the trainee advances through their training progression, using the weekly training report. Provide positive feedback to the faller trainee as they build their skills.

New Worker Tips:

- Start with a thorough, well thought out orientation. Don't just have the new worker read a safety manual. Make the orientation interesting, interactive and test their knowledge.
- Assign the new worker a good mentor. Mentors should have good teaching and communication skills and know how to do the job safely. Older workers often want to share their knowledge, give them the opportunity.
- Keep them away from bad influences or poor mentors. New workers are like sponges, they will pick up and model all the workplace behaviors – both good and bad.
- Don't assume. Young workers will often say that they understand something when they don't. They don't want to look stupid or delay getting down to work. Read their eyes and body language to tell if they really get what you are saying. Get them to demonstrate what you're expecting from them.
- Repetition is important. All workers, not just the new ones, won't fully understand something if it's only been explained to them once. Repeat the knowledge and shown them how it's done. The repetition will make the safe practice stick.



Resources:

1) Listen to Your Gut - Young worker resources from WorkSafeBC

<http://worksafebcowntoyourgut.com/>

2) What I Know Now – Employers sharing information about training young workers

<http://worksafebcwhatiknownow.com/>

