



The Month in Review

NOVEMBER 2005



Unsafe is Unacceptable

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NOVEMBER PLUS: This note covers November 1st to December 10th. I had it ready to go on the 1st, but there was so much going on that I delayed a few days to cover a number of important developments in early December.

The last two months have been incredibly active and difficult. We continued to incur fatalities and injuries in the sector at unacceptable rates. There was also unprecedented action from many quarters. With it came the collective resolve to ensure that 2006 sees major and significant improvements to how we manage safety in the woods.

FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES: First things first. To date, the Forest Sector has incurred **42 fatalities and 102 serious injuries** in 2005. Fatalities have gone from 34 to 42 since the last update. These were; 2 in helicopter logging, 3 in log hauling, 2 in manual tree falling, and 1 in yarding/ mechanized falling. Details are on our site at: http://www.bcforestsafe.org/fatality_injury.asp.

RAISING AWARENESS: With these most recent fatalities we appear to have crossed a threshold. Attention and scrutiny was already building and forestry's safety record was no longer an industry secret, largely invisible to the broader public. Awareness has now progressed through alarm to demands for action: and the sooner the better.

The Council helped to create this awareness. In March we had a special meeting on the fatalities that had occurred up to that time. Among other things, we realized that we didn't have timely or accurate information. Two of the early fatalities had not been reported in the media and many in the sector had no knowledge that they had occurred.

We resolved to take a number of steps to ensure that deaths in the sector would no longer go unnoticed.

Action was taken to:

- Develop a serious injury and fatality database;
- Produce and distribute Safety Alerts;
- Assist in improving investigations;
- Create and compile safety alerts;
- Improve our social response;
- Support the WFA Report on Faller Fatalities.

The Fatality and Serious Injury Database: Our first step was to report more rapidly and widely on serious

injuries and fatalities. We gathered statistics from a number of sources to better reflect what we considered the situation. We included several types of incidents that would not have been included in the past.

These included: helicopter logging, traveling to and from work, transportation (i.e. aircraft) and sawmills.

Information on fatalities is updated daily, and goes out immediately to over 1,4 000 subscribers, and it can be viewed on-line and printed.

Safety Alerts: We are consolidating all existing industry Safety Alerts from all sources and linking them to the database. We now have over 50 Safety Alerts and we are working with companies to ensure that all Safety Alerts being generated are shared throughout the industry in a consistent way. These are also being linked to the database.

Investigations: The Council is developing consistent guidelines for the conduct of incident investigations and we have assisted, on request, some companies lacking the capacity to meet regulatory requirements for investigations.

Social Response: Council members and staff are attending all memorials and we are taking note of the loss of valued colleagues. Other steps are being considered.

The WFA Report: The Council worked with the WFA to put out their report "A View from the Field" on faller fatalities. A remarkable document in terms of its voice and frankness, the report raised many concerns in the sector.

These steps taken by the Council have significantly contributed to the attention currently being paid to the safety issues. We now must start to turn the situation around and dramatically improve our performance.

EVENTS: In November and December, meetings were held with a number of organizations, often for the second or third time. These included:

- Meetings with the Opposition critics of Forestry and Labour. We anticipate making a presentation to the Opposition Caucus in the New Year.
- Meetings were held with a number of individual companies to review the Council's program and deal with specific issues. Several meetings were held on Vancouver Island with contractors. These had been arranged by the Truck Loggers Association (TLA).
- Meetings with community and industry groups in the interior and North on Forestry TruckSafe.
- On November 16th there was an important all day meeting of the Shared Safety Responsibility and Accountability Sub-committee of the Qualified Companies Initiative.
- On November 17th there was a meeting with BC Timber Sales Regional Managers to consider the Qualified Companies Initiative and how this would affect their operations.
- Also on November 17th there was a first meeting with the Board of the Coast Forests Products Association to review the work of the Council and the proposed Coastal Safety Initiative.
- On November 18th there was a follow-up presentation to the Council of Forest Industries (COFI) Forestry Committee focusing on Forestry TruckSafe and Qualified Companies.
- On November 23rd the Council was included in a meeting with executives and woodlands managers of Interfor held specifically to review the recent injuries and fatalities.

- On November 25th Council staff attended the Memorial Service of Ted Gramlich, the Duncan area faller who was killed earlier in the month.
- On November 30th Council staff met with the regional safety representatives of Steelworkers (Western Canada) in Burnaby.

The two most significant meetings in this period were the forestry leaders' meeting and the Steelworker Fatality Summit.

On December 1st, at the request of Council Chair, Jim Shepherd, 10 of BC's forestry leaders met to review the current safety situation. As a result of the meeting, a Communiqué was issued setting out their commitment to safety and the need for immediate steps to improve results.

On December 5th, the Steelworkers' Safety Summit was held in Vancouver. About 100 participants considered what needs to be done in the face of mounting fatalities this year. Presentations were made, including one by the Council.

The Steelworkers presented a six point plan that was considered along with many other issues and ideas brought to the discussion by participants. Participants included representatives from all parts of the industry as well as Ministers de Jong of Labour and Coleman of Forests.

More information on the CEO's meeting and the Summit are set out on the Council's site under "News and Views", http://www.bcforestsafesafe.org/media_center.asp

On December 7th, BC Forest Safety Council held its first AGM and last Board Meeting of 2005.

COMING IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY:

December is now winding down in terms of meetings. There may be a follow-up meeting of the CEO's with the two Ministers and the Chair of WorkSafeBC.

In terms of activity in the sector, the harvesting season in the Interior and the North will be going full tilt, with increased potential for incidents. Historically, December and January have been difficult months.

In terms of publications, the "**Forestry TruckSafe Action Plan**" will be released in December, including recommendations and initiatives to improve the safety of drivers, vehicles and roads. The "**Cost of Unsafe**" will be ready and released in December, providing detailed information on the costs of our current safety record, and the potential savings of improved safety. "**Shared Responsibility and Accountability for Safety in the Forest Sector**" will be ready in January, depending in part on the progress made at the January 10th meeting on Shared Safety Responsibility.

COUNCIL MEMBER EVENTS:

- On January 14th, the Western Fallers hold their Annual General Meeting in Vancouver
- January 17-20th is the Truck Loggers Association Conference and Trade Show
- February 1st is the date for the Western Silvicultural Contractors Association's Annual Meeting and Trade Show, in Victoria.