

Safety Alert of THE MONTH

August 2012

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

Diesel Exhaust and Cancer

In the forest industry we are exposed to the exhaust from diesel engines on a regular basis. There is increased concern that this exhaust causes lung cancer and should be avoided. A recent study from the International Agency for Research on Cancer “classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans, based on sufficient evidence that exposure is associated with an increased risk for lung cancer.”

Diesel exhaust contains a mixture of different gases and particles. Some of the gases include nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and carbon monoxide which are all harmful. The particles include metals like nickel and arsenic which are known to cause cancer. Diesel exhaust contains 20 times more particles than gasoline exhaust and these particles are small enough that they can be directly inhaled into the lungs.



Recommended Preventative Actions:

- **Maintain adequate ventilation when working around diesel exhaust. This will not be a problem if you are working outside but avoid running any engines in a shop or garage without opening doors and windows.**



- **If the equipment must be run indoors, consider using an exhaust extraction system to vent the exhaust to the outside.**
- **Discuss this information with your co-workers or crew; this is a good topic for your monthly tailgate meeting. Awareness of the issue will help workers reduce their exposure to the exhaust.**
- **Keep equipment well maintained. Keep diesel engines tuned up to reduce emissions and repair any exhaust leaks that might get into the cab of the machine or vehicle.**
- **Avoid unnecessary idling. This will save you some money and will reduce others exposure to the exhaust.**



Safety Alert of THE MONTH

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

Additional Resources:

1) Here's a link to the press release from the International Agency for Research on Cancer:

http://press.iarc.fr/pr213_E.pdf

2) Here's a good facts sheet from the Government of California.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/hesis/Documents/diesel.pdf>

