

# Safety Alert OF THE MONTH

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

September 2018

## Smart Risk Taking

We take risks every day, it's unavoidable. We start taking risks as soon as we get up in the morning. If we didn't take these risks, nothing would get done and everything would grind to a stop. However, in safety, risk is often discussed like it is a bad thing. So how can we make sense of this contradiction?

We have to train ourselves to be expert risk takers, only taking smart risks and not the risks that are going to result in damage to ourselves, others, or our equipment. So how do you know if a risk is smart?

### How to Take Smart Risks

1. Planning is very important. Right now, take a few minutes to think about your job, the hazards involved and a few practical ways to manage those hazards. Do this every morning before starting work. It's easier to do this planning ahead of time to avoid surprises.
2. Gather as much information as possible, don't guess. Know what the outcome is going to be before you take action. Don't know all the facts about a situation? That's a real warning sign, so look at the potential outcome of what you are planning to do and don't take the risk if it could lead to a serious incident or injury.
3. Get a second opinion about the situation. Often getting someone else's opinion will help you decide what to do. Just explaining the situation out loud to someone else can give you the clarity of mind to know what to do.
4. Beware of mind traps. When we are tired, under pressure, or in a rush, we ignore the signals from our brain that help us make the right decision. It's the "Let's just get this job done, so we can go home!" attitude that we've all had that gets us into dangerous situations.
5. Think about how you can fail safely. If things go wrong, can you set things up to protect yourself and minimize the damage? For example, no one wants a piece of equipment to roll over. But if it does, what steps can be taken to make sure the equipment doesn't roll multiple times and ensure that the operator can be rescued right away?
6. Have a professional attitude. You'll know a professional logger, truck driver, or forestry worker when you meet one. They are alert, always learning something new, and set high standards for themselves. They seem to be two steps ahead and others often go to them for advice. Work to be a professional at your job by improving your attitude and knowledge.
7. Engage your brain when on the job. Fight the urge to tune out at work and always be alert to the small changes that could have a big impact on your safety. Changes in the people, equipment or weather on site can all result in new hazards.



**Risk Tip** – Think about the on-the-job decisions that you make like you were investing your own money. When you invest your money, how do you do it? Go to the casino and bet it all on a hand of blackjack? Or do you invest it safely in equipment upgrades that will maintain your business's productivity and long term profitability? Keep that in mind the next time you take a risk and choose the safe option.

