

AG calls for more effort

The provincial government must work harder to reach its stated goal of eliminating forestry deaths and serious injuries, says a report released in late January by B.C. Auditor General John Doyle.

“Strong leadership and commitment is required now to guide, complement and support efforts taken by industry,” he declared.

Doyle found government involvement in forest safety “fragmented among several bodies”, with “safety regulations...not vigorously enforced for all forest workers.”

For the complete audit, click on “Reports” at www.bcauditor.com.

The Council supported Doyle’s calls for more attention on resource roads, supervisors, independent operators, training and safety information — declaring that “improving the safety culture in forestry will take many players, and we all have a part to play.”

Forests Minister Rich Coleman saw room for improvement, but said progress had been made since he commissioned the audit that began a year ago.

Coleman intends to implement the report’s recommendations to his ministry. As this went to press, there had been no comment on recommendations affecting them from the B.C. Ministry of Labour and WorkSafeBC.

Resource road remedies

Remedies for problems on B.C.’s resource roads were released this week in a comprehensive review titled *The Road Less Travelled*.

It was produced by Forest Safety Ombudsman Roger Harris, appointed to his independent position by the Council in 2006.

Last year, Harris collected input from stakeholders in forestry and other industries and the general public. He travelled to 20 communities across the province, conducting one-on-one interviews and public meetings with as many as 100 people.

“I heard how resource roads impact lives,” said Harris.

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A turning point for safety

Much has changed since the Council was created in 2004. We were all about projects and promises then, developing new safety approaches and attitudes. The turning point came last year, as development turned into province-wide delivery of fully-functional safety programs.

- Forest Worker Development has trained thousands of workers and established manual tree falling as the province’s first fully-certified forestry occupation.
- Starting from virtually zero, SAFE Companies last year registered 2,752 forestry operations and certified 294 as meeting industry safety standards.
- Forestry TruckSafe has solidified its role as the go-to source for industry, drivers and government.

Most important, B.C. forestry’s safety performance has improved, but we still have a long way to go.

In 2008, as our programs continue to grow, we’ll advance three new initiatives — investigating health and wellness opportunities for forest workers, improving incident reporting and investigation, and exploring the potential of the wood products manufacturers more fully joining the Council.

All this occurs while forestry operators confront terrible pressures, a factor always top-of-mind as we work on Council activities.

Our Board knows that safety remains a critically-important challenge. To keep B.C. forestry a dynamic and diverse industry, we must maintain our focus on safety and build on industry’s early successes. This is our commitment to the future.



TANNER ELTON, CEO

Newsletter goes digital

In 2008, *Forest Safety News* changes from a printed newsletter to a digital format emailed to readers. Besides saving industry money, this allows us to publish more often and give readers direct access to additional information on the Council website. We hope you find this useful, and will let us know what you think.



More are taking part

Building on last year's growth, the Council's flagship program continues to involve more of the B.C. forest sector.

SAFE Companies had registered 1,437 small companies, 1,149 independent companies and 260 large companies as of February 1.

A total of 200 small companies and 136 large ones had earned SAFE certification. The Council has submitted the names of companies certified last year to WorkSafeBC for five-per-cent rebates on their 2007 assessments.

Details on the program are at www.bcforestsafeco.org/program-safeco-index.htm.

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"The goal wasn't just to record problems; it was important to hear people's solutions."

His findings rely on that input and Harris' own forestry experience.

"The review focuses on the physical component of resource roads and, equally important, the management regime governing how we act on those roads.

"It's important to recognize that logging isn't the dominant user anymore, although most of the rules are still from the days when resource roads were 'logging' roads."

Harris' 17 recommendations "try to provide guidance to modernize resource roads to reflect today's reality."

The complete review is at www.bcforestsafeco.org.

Certified faller turns author

BC's first certified faller has released a book on forestry, small town life and the IWA on the coast.

Many Flowers by Al Lundgren begins with Swedish immigrant Erik Lundgren facing the hardships of Alberta homesteading, follows son Henry into union and community activism and turns to the third generation represented by the author.

Lundgren relates adventures, humorous moments and tragedies that helped prepare him to work on committees that developed provincial safety training standards. Complementing the text are 100 archival photographs starting from 1907.

The book costs \$30 plus shipping. For more details, email a.l.lundgren@shaw.ca.

Safety regs change

Major amendments to forest safety regulations were announced by WorkSafeBC in late January.

This follows the first major forestry regulatory review since 1997, which began in 2006 with stakeholder consultations that included the Council and industry.

Details on all the changes can be found by scrolling down to "Announcements" at www.worksafebc.com.

Most changes take effect May 1, although WorkSafeBC has delayed:

- For an unspecified period, amendments that might be affected by resource road legislation being developed by the B.C. government.
- Until January 1, 2009, a requirement that professional engineers must certify binder removal stations.

The Council is working with WorkSafeBC on implementation plans to be announced soon.

FIRST AID — New first aid regulations that took effect February 1 carry implications for forestry operations, as outlined in a Council bulletin at www.bcforestsafeco.org/content-nav-alerts/2008/alerts-08-02-01-reg_changes.pdf.

The changes involve: air transport of injured workers; basic first aid requirements; hazard assessments for those working alone; chemical or biological hazards; moving scaffold and other work platforms manually.

Plan your training online

Plan training months ahead with an online Council calendar at www.bcforestsafeco.org/content-program-safeco/program-safeco-12-calendar.htm. It offers details on:

Safety Advocates Workshops – Relaxed information sessions on the SAFE Companies program, with assistance for small forestry companies.

Small Employer Occupational Health and Safety Training – Required for companies with three to 19 employees and some independent employers seeking SAFE certification.

Internal Auditor Training – Qualifies large company employees to conduct internal second- and third-year audits to maintain SAFE certification.

External Auditor Training – Prepares health and safety professionals to conduct external SAFE certification audits for large employers.

Basic Forestry Supervisor Training – Covers WorkSafeBC regulations for supervisors and practical supervision in a forestry setting.

Faller Supervisor Training – A key step toward becoming a certified faller supervisor.

