



SAFETY ALERT & BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

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Fighting Complacency

AOM: 2024-06-14

Companies with a good safety culture are often described as being vigilant. You may hear people at all levels in these companies say things like “Yes, we have a good safety record but the risks are still there. We need to stay alert. We’re only one step away from having a serious incident.” It’s this kind of mindset and attitude that keeps people sharp and on the lookout for potential hazards and problems.

In companies with well established safe work procedures, an experienced workforce and a good safety record with few incidents there can be a subtle shift towards complacency. A sense of comfort when things are going well can pave the way for a relaxed attitude which often leads to a “surprise incident” that shouldn’t have been a surprise at all.

Here are some ideas your company can do to help fight complacency:

1. Think like a new company

What steps would you take if your company was brand new, with new and inexperienced workers? There would be more emphasis on training and assessing workers to make sure they are qualified to do the work. Supervisors would spend more time in the field, coaching and correcting their crews. The safety program would be built from the ground up with an emphasis on researching the best and safest way of doing the work. Overall, there would be an attitude of “not knowing it all” and wanting to constantly improve operations and the safety program.

2. Don’t Rely on Experience Alone

Compliance with safe work procedures is a requirement for all workers, regardless of their experience level. Don’t assume that someone is working safely just because they are a veteran worker with lots of experience. Enforce the rules fairly and consistently with all employees.

3. Investigate near misses

Near misses are gifts of information. These are incidents that *almost* had a negative result. Appreciate every close call and near miss and investigate them to find gaps in your safety program. Investigating near misses can also keep incident investigation skills sharp and shows workers that safety is a priority.



4. Realistic emergency drills

Emergency drills are required every year but they are also useful when there are no incidents or near misses to investigate. Very rarely does the response to an emergency go according to plan and a lot can be learned from a realistic drill. Have multiple observers watch as they will likely have different observations to share.



5. Explain why

Are workers just going through the motions? Following procedures mindlessly? Do they understand the “why” behind the requirements to do things a certain way? Take the time to share stories of past incidents and explain why things are done. A better understanding of the reasons why safe work procedures are put in place motivates workers to do things correctly.

6. Value different perspectives

When someone new visits the operation, get them to tell you what they see including the good, the bad and the ugly. This could be a SAFE Companies Advisor, safety auditor, new employee or even a peer from a different operation who does similar work.

7. Discussing what could go wrong

During pre-work meetings and crew talks, bring up a “what if” scenario. For example:

- What if someone got hurt in an inaccessible area and couldn’t move. How would we get them out?
- What if the weather changed suddenly today, how should we change our plans to keep everyone safe?
- What if we didn’t have the correct tool to do a repair? How do we handle those situations so we don’t cut corners when the pressure is on?

These discussions will remind your crew about the risks and can counteract any complacency that might creep in when workdays feel repetitive.

Additional Resources:

[Workplace Complacency Crew Talk](#)

[A Guide to Effective Emergency Drills for Forestry Operators](#)

[Worker Training and Assessment Resources](#)

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BCFSC LATEST NEWS & RESOURCES

[FIRS App](#) - the full version of the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) Forest Incident Reporting System App is now available to download from your App store. Use the FIRS App to manage forms and documents for safety-related paperwork related to SAFE Companies audit submissions.

[Forest Safety News \(FSN\) | June Issue](#) – the summer edition of the FSN is now available. Download a copy and share it with your peers.

[Load Securement Contractor Toolboxes](#) – visit the BCFSC YouTube channel to find our Load Securement Toolbox Videos demonstrating various methods to throw wrappers to help reduce shoulder and musculoskeletal injuries (MSI).

[BC Wildfire Service's Mitigation Strategies for Wildfire Smoke and Other Respiratory Hazards in Wildland Firefighting](#) – watch the webinar recording from May 1st featuring Drew Lichty, an Occupational Hygienist at Canada Wildfire, and Steve Lemon, Superintendent of Safety & Wellbeing at BC Wildfire Service discussing the challenges posed by wildfire smoke exposure in the context of wildland firefighting.

BCFSC TRAINING

Scheduled classroom training returns in the Fall:

October 9 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Kamloops](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

October 10-11 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Kamloops](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 16 | [Basic Incident Investigation – Cranbrook](#)

This course provides a basic understanding of the methods, tools, and processes needed to conduct an incident investigation.

October 17-18 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Cranbrook](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 17-18 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Prince George](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

October 22-25 | [Falling Supervisor – Nelson](#)

Participants will learn the roles and responsibilities of a falling supervisor and will become familiar with processes used by a falling supervisor to support their due diligence.

Oct 31-Nov 1 | [Due Diligence for Forest Supervisors – Campbell River](#)

This two-day classroom workshop will equip supervisors with knowledge of their legal responsibilities and how to prove due diligence.

Refer to the [Training section of our website](#) for more information on upcoming classroom training and costs.