



File: 1460-06/FORE  
CLIFF: 93762

March 17, 2006

To: BCTS licencees

Dear Licencee:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of some of the initiatives underway relative to safety programs and safety culture that will affect future BC Timber Sales (BCTS) operations. I also want to remind you of the very important basic needs for safety that must be incorporated into your safety programs under current WorkSafe BC legislation.

There were a number of serious accidents or fatalities in the forest sector across British Columbia during 2005. In fact, the 43 fatalities and 106 serious injuries rank among the highest on record in the forest industry since statistics have been kept.

BCTS wants to work with you to make BCTS operations and all operations throughout the forest sector safer for forest sector workers and visitors. The government of British Columbia and forest industry companies are working with employers and workers on the issue of forest sector safety. In 2002, they established a Forest Safety Taskforce. Building upon recommendations in the Task Force report of 2004, several steps have been taken to improve forest sector safety, including creation of the BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC). The unfortunate 2005 statistics show us that everyone working in the forest sector needs to do more, starting right now, to reduce or eliminate these injuries and fatalities.

I want to acknowledge that many BCTS licensees and other small operators maintain solid safety programs and have excellent safety records. However, the 2005 statistics indicate that there are other operations which need to review and improve their safety programs, worker orientation, and ongoing worker and site supervision.

**Minister of Forests and Range January 17, 2006 announcement on BCTS and the BCFSC "Safe Companies" Initiative**



Page 1 of 4

Ministry of Forests and Range BC Timber Sales

Location:  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 727 Fisgard Street,  
Victoria, BC

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9510 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9C2

Tel: (250) 387-1261  
Fax: (250) 356-6209

On January 17, 2006, the Minister of Forests and Range announced that, when the SAFE Companies Initiative of the BCFSC is in place (expected no later than early 2007), all companies who operate on timber sales will need to be registered as SAFE Companies under the BCFSC certificate of recognition program which is being developed in co-operation with WorkSafe BC and the forest industry in British Columbia. You should note that at the current time, the SAFE Companies audit process is being tested and there are no approved auditors for the program. Please check with the BCFSC if you have questions about the program or availability and qualifications of auditors.

What is a SAFE company? Detailed information is available on the BCFSC website at <http://www.bcforestsafes.org/index.asp> or through a link on the BCTS website at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/safety>. The BCFSC will provide more information on SAFE Companies through their advocate program and at regional meetings across the province planned for the spring and summer of 2006. I strongly encourage you to review the BCFSC website and participate in an upcoming information session to ensure you have a clear understanding of what will be required of you in the future.

The BCFSC also sponsors the BC Faller Certification Program. The requirement for every faller to become a certified faller is in place. I encourage you to review the requirements and opportunities for fallers to become certified. The BC Fallers certification website is also available on the BCFSC website or through a link on the BCTS website.

**What can you expect to do in the interim as we wait for the SAFE Companies initiative to come available?**

WorkSafe BC legislation and policies set the minimum standard for a safety program in the forest sector and with other industries.

WorkSafe BC field officers are currently conducting a pilot program called the "High Risk Industries Compliance Strategy" and will have an increased presence with forest sector field operations including any sales or contracts awarded under the BCTS program. As part of this strategy, WorkSafe BC officers will look closely at your complete safety program.

BCTS is undergoing an in-depth review of its roles and responsibilities for safety, relative to those of licensees' who take ownership of the timber sale licences. As well, BCTS is working closely with WorkSafe BC to clarify roles respecting responsibility, monitoring and enforcement of safety requirements in licences and permits.

In the future, BCTS staff and contractors will observe licensee safety programs more closely as we do our timber sale licence field monitoring. In doing so, as required in WorkSAFE BC legislation, BCTS will advise you of any observable safety issues and may also advise WorkSafe BC of any obvious deficiencies or unsafe practices BCTS staff encounter in the

Licencee

field.

### **What are the key points in a Safety program?**

The attachments to this letter are extracted from the WorkSafe BC website (<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Portals/Forestry/Home.asp>) and they provide some information on the key points of a safety program.. If you have not already done so, you should consult with WorkSafe BC or a qualified safety professional to ensure you are meeting the legislated requirements and the needs of your organisation.

The WorkSafe BC website has much additional information in this regard.

A Safe Companies Toolkit will soon be available on the BCFSC website, which will further help you determine and deliver your basic safety program needs.

### **Notice of project to Worksafe BC**

I would also like to remind you that Section 26.4 of the WorkSafe BC Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulation requires that an employer(licencee) or the prime contractor on an operation if the operation involves workers of more then one employer, send a Notice of Project in writing to the local Worksafe BC office. Please review this section of the legislation and discuss the requirements with a Worksafe BC officer to ensure that you are in compliance with this obligation.

### **Summary**

In summary, I am asking you to review your current safety program and take the appropriate steps necessary to ensure your operations meet existing legislation and operational needs. If you have any doubt about this requirement, you should discuss this with WorkSafe BC officers or program specialists, or a professional safety consultant.

Over the next few months, it will be important for you to become familiar with the BCFSC and the SAFE Companies and Faller Certification programs to ensure you are on track to continue participation in the BC Timber Sales program.

BCTS will work with the BCFSC, WorkSafe BC and the Ministry of Forests and Range to keep you informed of developments and the schedule for any changes to the registration and requirements to successfully bid and operate on timber sales sold by BCTS or contracts awarded by BCTS.

Improving forest worker safety is everyone's responsibility and BCTS is strongly committed to working with all stakeholders to improve the safety record of the industry.

We welcome your suggestions or comments on how to improve forest worker safety, encourage a safety culture with our workers, and ensure safe worksites. Please direct

Licencee

comments or inquiries to me, to your local BCTS office, or any of the contacts noted on the BCTS Forest Safety website.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Parnell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Grant Parnell  
Director, Operations  
BC Timber Sales

Attachment(s): General Safety Rules  
Guidelines

pc: Tanner Elton, BC Forest Safety Council  
Don Dahr, Worksafe BC  
Peter Newman, Worksafe BC  
Trish Balcaen, MOFR