

Chapter 1: BC Timber Sales Health and Safety Program Overview

Introduction

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) subscribes to the BC Forest Industry Health and Safety Accord. We are committed to improving worker safety and eliminating fatalities and injuries in the forest sector.

Operating safely is one of the benchmarks of success for the BCTS program. Operating safety involves everyone. All BCTS employees must cooperate and do their part to implement the program as well as provide input into improving the BCTS Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) program in order for the organization to meet its safety objectives.

The BCTS OHS program will meet legal requirements and meet or exceed the BC Forest Safety Council SAFE Companies standard. BCTS will become a SAFE certified company.

Throughout this manual, BCTS has attempted to utilise the same wording and meanings used by the BC Forest Safety Council with their SAFE Company standards. Please check the glossary to be clear on the meaning of words or phrases which may not be familiar to you.

BCTS is an autonomous Division of the British Columbia Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR) and operates in a complex environment. Within its mandate, BCTS must also achieve program goals, meet legislated requirements in forest management and carry out many functions in a manner similar to a private sector forest company, however, as a government agency, BCTS also provides service in a regulatory and administrative role.

Scope of the BCTS Safety Program

This program is for BCTS employees. The program will cover all aspects of employee responsibilities for safety, including how BCTS staff must deal with timber sale licence holders, contractors, service providers, visitors and the public.

The OHS program and manual will apply to all BCTS employees on a provincial basis. All BCTS operations will adopt the core program laid out in this manual. Local procedures will be developed by each business area and HQ and will also be part of this manual. The manual describes where and to what extent local procedures are to be developed and implemented.

BCTS intends to seek SAFE Company certification on a single provincial basis, rather than on a business area basis.

The manual and any local procedures attached to it are designed to be a complete source of BCTS program information and requirements for Health and Safety.

BCTS contractors will normally maintain their own safety programs and do not directly fall under the scope of this program. The BCTS OHS program describes BCTS roles and responsibilities in regard to dealing with contractors; for BCTS being a prime contractor or with designating a prime contractor, and describes exceptions for contract workers placed in the scope of the program in emergency situations, where other alternatives are not practicable.

Timber sale licence holders do not fall under the scope of this program. The OHS program describes the procedures BCTS staff must follow when dealing with timber sale licence holders. The program describes the responsibilities of BCTS staff when planning, advertising, and administering timber sale licences sold under the BCTS program. For the purposes of the manual, road permit holders, road use permit holders, or holders of any other permit or licence issued or entered into by BCTS carry the same responsibilities as the timber sale licence holder.

BCTS visitors, service providers, and the general public do not fall under this OHS program. The program provides guidance to staff, including their responsibilities when dealing with visitors, service providers or the public on BCTS buildings, infrastructure or operating areas.

A key component of the BCTS OHS program is continuous improvement. BCTS employees are encouraged to bring forward suggestions for improvements. This program will evolve and improve over time.

Components of the BCTS OHS Program

The program is built on four components.

The BCTS OHS Program Manual

The official version of the BCTS OHS program is housed on the BCTS provincial website and is maintained by the provincial safety co-ordinator. BCTS Business Area and HQ safety contacts will maintain the local procedures which form part of the manual.

The BCTS Field Safety Guidebook

This is an important reference tool meant for field staff to take with them in the field. It will contain key documents, summaries of policies, checklists, safe work procedures, records and employee sign-off of orientation and on the job training. It is not meant to be the complete program or replace the program manual.

BCTS OHS Awareness Training.

This is initial training focused on all BCTS staff to acquaint them with the new program and allow BCTS to begin implementation of the program. It will be followed up with on the job training and other supplementary training and may be used in the longer term for new staff orientations.

BCTS OHS Refresher Training

BCTS is developing a computer based training module fashioned after the awareness training to be available to staff to use for refresher training or orientation on the manual and program as required. We expect this program to be ready for use in 2008.

Ministry of Forests and Range Strategic Human Resources Website

This site will provide reference material and additional guidance for BCTS Staff. The website can be found at: <http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/hrb/ww/safety/index.htm>

Communication Opportunities in the BCTS OHS Program

Communication at all levels is the key to the successful implementation and improvement of this program. Key communication opportunities in this program are:

- Corrective Action Logs in each Business area and HQ (Chapter 12).
- Safety Alerts (Chapter 16).
- Management leadership and meetings and safety meetings (Chapter 12).
- Training including on the job training and orientation (Chapter 15).
- Management Reviews (Chapter 25).

Background on the Development of the BCTS Safety Program

Until 2006, BCTS delivered its safety responsibilities in full cooperation and under common programs with the MOFR district programs for the areas where BCTS had a field staff presence.

In April 2006, senior management of BCTS made a decision to develop a comprehensive BCTS safety program to meet new and changing organizational needs. Key factors and management guidance driving program creation were:

1. BCTS is an autonomous organization with a specific mandate and goals. Management of BCTS must ensure that the OHS program meets the needs of BCTS as a stand alone organization.
2. The Minister of Forests and Range has made a commitment that, when the Safety Council's SAFE Companies program is operational, all persons conducting work on BCTS operations must be a certified SAFE company or work for a certified SAFE company. BCTS must implement a program to meet or exceed the SAFE companies audit standard and become a

- certified SAFE company. The schedule for implementation of the SAFE companies program is as follows:
- BCTS as an organization will become safe company certified in the fall of 2007.
 - BCTS will require all timber sale licence holders and designated contractors who take on new timber sales and contracts after April 1, 2007 to ensure everyone working on the licence or contract is registered in the SAFE company program with the BC Forest Safety Council or works for a company that is registered.
 - BCTS will require all timber sale licence holders and designated contractors who take on new timber sales and contracts after a time to be determined in the fall of 2008 to only allow fully SAFE certified companies to work on the licence or contract.
3. BCTS responsibilities for preparing and delivering timber sale licences to auction carry direct responsibilities for planning engineering, site prescriptions, road construction, and post-harvest treatments not often required for other licences issued by the Ministry of Forests and Range. This can create confusion or lack of clarity on BCTS roles and responsibilities, particularly involving forest sector safety. The BCTS safety program must clarify roles and responsibilities of BCTS employees when dealing with contractors, licencees, and permittees, visitors, public and service providers.
4. BCTS remains part of the MOFR and while it will have a separate OHS program, it still will make use of infrastructure, office location, and other operational and expertise efficiencies by co-operating with the MOFR in local office locations by maintaining:
- joint occupational health and safety committees where practical;
 - common man-check systems and vehicle and building inspection systems; and
 - Common training programs and first aid and emergency response systems.
 - Synchronizing other safety practices that are practical, meet the standard, and cost effective.

BCTS Safety Program Development and Continuous Improvement

During the summer and fall of 2006, a safety task team appointed by the BCTS leadership team consisting of BCTS employees from each business area and covering a variety of classifications reviewed program needs, and worked to produce a revised BCTS OHS program. The program and manual are set up to encompass all elements required in an OHS program and all elements required to be a SAFE certified company.

The task team:

- contracted a professional consultant to provide advice in the development of the manual;
- shared funding with a private sector forest company on the production of a development guide to assist with meeting the SAFE company standard; and
- Met on a number occasions as a group to provide input to the manual and program.

The program manual will be located and maintained on the BCTS website. Senior management of BCTS will approve the first program manual and all future changes to it. A headquarters' employee designated as the provincial safety co-ordinator will ensure the manual is maintained and accessible on the BCTS website. An employee in each business area will be designated the business area contact and will be responsible for local training, expertise, maintaining local procedures and records and other local duties. The current web based manual will be considered as the official program manual.

Co-operation with other Divisions of the Ministry of Forests and Range

The manual includes elements that require BCTS cooperation and collaboration with other divisions of the MOFR, especially Operations Division, and will specify when this is required.

BCTS Program Background

BCTS Strategic Goals

BCTS is a stand alone organization within the MOFR created to support revitalization of the British Columbia forest sector and economy. To fulfill its mandate, BCTS has four strategic goals:

1. Is a high-performing organization with skilled, motivated, and proud people.
2. Provides a credible reference point for costs and pricing of timber harvested from public land in BC.
3. Provides a reliable supply of timber to the market, through open and competitive auctions – subject to meeting the requirements of cost and price referencing stated in Goal 2.
4. Maximizes net revenue for the Province – subject to the requirements of cost and price referencing stated in Goal 2 and supplying timber for auction stated in Goal 3.

BCTS Staff Organization and Program Size

In addition to its BCTS headquarters office in Victoria, BCTS is organized into 12 business areas across the province with an operational field staff presence in 33 locations. Approximately 600 people work directly for BCTS.

Each business area awards a number of contracts on a competitive basis for completing additional work required to be done by BCTS.

The organization is responsible for managing and delivering to market about 20% of the provincial Crown allowable annual cut (AAC) or approximately 16 million cubic metres of timber. This involves tendering and selling over 500 timber sales to independent operators each year.

BCTS Strategic Key Responsibilities

BCTS responsibilities for forest management include:

- Strategic and operational planning and First Nation consultation to deliver specified timber sale licences and the overall volume assigned to the program.
- Operational field assessments, engineering, cruising and field layout of areas to be sold under the program.
- Main road construction to provide access into areas to be sold as timber sales.
- Tendering and award of timber sale licences through an established competitive process.
- Monitoring and administering of active timber sale licences and associated permits including conformance with the environmental management system.
- Post-harvest silviculture to attain free-to-grow status on areas harvested under the program.

BCTS does not have responsibility for statutory compliance and enforcement. This responsibility rests with the MOFR district managers.

Much of the planning and administration of this work is done by BCTS staff. Field work, road construction and reforestation work is often done by contractors working for BCTS.

More information can be found on the BCTS website at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/>

Local Procedures

None.

Forms or Checklists

None.