

Chapter 27: BC Forest Safety Council

Introduction

The British Columbia Forest Safety Council (Safety Council) was created in September of 2004 as a not for profit society dedicated to promoting forest safety in the sector. The Safety Council includes all of the major forestry organisations and is fully supported by WorkSafeBC and the government of British Columbia.

The Safety Council was founded as a direct result of the work and recommendations of the Forest Safety Task Force. The Taskforce created a comprehensive strategy to improve the safety record of the BC Forest Sector, with a primary recommendation being to establish a permanent safety infrastructure.

Safety Council Vision and Mission

Promoting cultural change to ensure that safety is treated as an over-riding priority and shared responsibility throughout the sector.

Promoting a safety conscious legal regime in which the laws, regulations, and compliance programs encourage and support safety

Developing a competent and confident workforce where workers are trained, certified and encouraged to work safely

Encouraging Qualified (SAFE) companies where safety programs are encouraged and rewarded.

Member Organizations

BC Timber Sales
Central Interior Logging Association
Coast Forest Products Association
Council of Forest Industries
Federation of BC Woodlot Association
Interior Logging Association
Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association
Ministry of Forests and Range
NorthWest Loggers Association
Steelworkers IWA Council (USWA-IWA)
Truck Loggers Association
Western Fallers Association
Western Silvicultural Contractors' Association
WorkSafeBC (observer)

BC Timber Sales Involvement with the Safety Council

BC Timber Sales is a full member of the BC Forest Safety Council. The BCTS Assistant Deputy Minister sits as the BCTS director on the Safety Council. The Safety Council Board of Directors meets quarterly each year. Alternates for the ADM are the Director of Operations and the provincial safety co-ordinator.

As a full member of the council BCTS will also have a seat on the Safety Council Policy and Planning Committee. Policy and Planning Committee meetings will generally be attended by the provincial safety co-ordinator. There are four to six Policy and Planning meetings each year.

The Safety Council also has a number of working committees which BCTS may choose to volunteer for or be invited to work on. Further information can be found on the Safety Council website. Generally there is a key working or advisory committee for each major program the Safety Council is implementing. Other advisory committees also may be formed to assist the CEO or Board by providing input into decisions.

BCTS may also provide funding through grants or contribution agreements for various Safety Council programs.

Summary of Safety Council Programs

A full description of these programs including updates, contacts and links can be found the Safety Council website at <http://www.bcforestsafe.org/>

The BC Forest Safety Council is the certifying body for the SAFE Companies Program. WorkSafeBC has accepted and approved the BC Forest Safety Council SAFE Companies program as part of its Certificate of Recognition Program (COR) for the forest sector in BC.

Under the SAFE Companies program the Safety Council has established a (Basic Audit and Safety Evaluation) BASE audit standard. This standard outlines the requirements which must be met in the development and ongoing implementation of a safety program in order to qualify as a SAFE Company. In order to be certified as a SAFE company, you must also implement your program for at least three months, have your program audited and the audit accepted by the Safety Council. Certified SAFE companies can then receive a COR from WorkSafeBC and a five per cent rebate on their annual assessment provided they are in good standing with WorkSafeBC.

The Safety Council recognizes three different sizes of company in the SAFE companies program and each company size has different program and audit requirements. These sizes are:

- BASE audits for companies with 20 or more employees.
- Small employer BASE (SEBASE) audits for companies with 3-19 employees.
- Independent small employers BASE (ISEBASE) for companies with 1 or 2 persons. Note, this category is still in development and not yet approved.

Workforce Development

The Safety council continues to run existing programs and develop new programs to ensure workers in the forest sector and new workers entering the sector have the training and skills to do their jobs safely. Key programs include:

- BC faller training standard and certification program.
- Supervisor training.

Additional programs will be introduced over time.

Safe Silviculture

The BC Safe silviculture project intends to reduce injuries on forestry activities including tree planting, cone picking, weeding, spacing, and fire fighting.

Forestry TruckSafe Program

The Forestry TruckSafe program works with the forest industry, government agencies and regulatory bodies, other resource industries, public partners , and all road users to reduce the incidence of injuries and fatalities in the transportation sector of the forest industry –including log hauling , chips and lumber transport , and going to and from work in BC's forests.

BC Forest Safety Ombudsman

The Forest Safety Ombudsman is part of the Safety council and has a clear mandate to investigate safety issues and recommend the best means to address them. The Ombudsman will use review, recommendation, mediation and conciliation where necessary. The Ombudsman will also rely on international experience and leading examples of success to inform the process. The Ombudsman will adhere to the following principles of operation.

- Impartiality in all respects, both in practice and in perception of practice.
- Fair and timely process.
- Confidentiality for companies and workers in order to identify real safety problems and find workable solutions to these safety problems.
- Co-ordination of action given the number of organisations involved in safety in British Columbia. In particular the ombudsman will work closely with the WorkSafeBC given its mandate to enhance safety in British Columbia.

Responsibilities for Dealing with the Safety Council

Assistant Deputy Minister

- Perform the duties of the BCTS director on the Board of the BC Forest Safety Council.
- Provide input into strategic council activities and programs.
- Provide direction to local managers and employees on dealing with council.

Provincial Safety Co-ordinator

- Prepare reports, statistics, input and discussion from BCTS and employees to the ADM for discussion at the Safety Council Board.
- Act as an alternate director as required.
- Represent BCTS on the Policy and planning committee and other committees as determined appropriate by BCTS management.
- Co-ordinate and respond to requests for data on BCTS, statistics or other information required by the Safety Council.

All Employees

- Be knowledgeable on the policies and programs of the Safety Council and of the Health and Safety Accord.

Local Procedures

None

Forms and Checklists

None