



November 4, 2004

BACKGROUNDER

BRITISH COLUMBIA FOREST SAFETY COUNCIL

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

The Council's mandate is to work within the forest industry to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries and create an environment of working safely and encouraging improved health and safety programs, performance, and results.

The Council will work with forest industry employers, workers, contractors and the provincial government to implement the fundamental changes necessary to make working in the forests of British Columbia safer.

The BC Forest Safety Council is a direct result of the work of the Forest Safety Task Force, created by the Minister of Skills Development and Labour to develop an Action Plan on how to improve safety in the Forest.

The Task Force produced a comprehensive forest safety strategy that was set out in a report to the Minister in December 2003. An Implementation Team was then formed and resulted directly in the creation of the Forest Safety Council. The Council is now the custodian of the Task Force report and responsible for its implementation. The full Report can be viewed on the Council's website, www.bcforestsafe.org.

The Council's work plan will focus on four critical areas:

- **Promoting Cultural Change** to ensure that safety is treated as an over-riding priority and a 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 and certified and encouraged to work safely.
- **Encourage Qualified Companies** where safety programs are encouraged and rewarded.

As one of its first priorities, the Council is currently implementing the BC Faller Training Standard & Certification Program in close cooperation and with the assistance of the WCB. This is a major step and the first example of moving toward a certified and trained workforce in this critical area.

Examples of other safety initiatives being considered by the Council include:

- Supervisor training and certification;
- Truck logging and the use of vehicles generally, as part of the broader TruckSafe initiative;
- The development of safety audits and reviews;
- Silviculture Safety;
- A safety review of legislation and regulations, and
- A review of current compliance and enforcement measures.

Each of the following organizations is a member and has representation on the Board of Directors:

- Central Interior Logging Association (CILA)
- Coast Forest and Lumber Association (CFLA)
- Council of Forest Industries (COFI)
- Interior Logging Association (ILA)
- Interior Lumber Manufacturers' Association (ILMA)
- North West Loggers Association (NWLA)
- Steelworkers – IWA Council (IWA)
- Truck Loggers Association (TLA)
- Western Fallers' Association (WFA)
- Western Silviculture Contractors' Association (WSCA)

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and the Ministry of Forests have been invited to sit on the Board as observers.

The interim senior officers of the Council are: Chair Jim Shepherd, Chief Executive Office of Canfor, representing COFI; Vice Chair Keith Playfair, independent contract faller, representing CILA; and Secretary Treasurer, Ron Corbeil representing the Steelworkers – IWA Council.

The Council is funded by the Forest Industry through the WCB.

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For further information on forest safety in British Columbia, visit www.bcforestsafe.org or contact:

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