

FORESTRY

Employers like you hire more than 2,000 young workers across our province¹. From 15 to 24 years old, they work in a broad range of occupations, including tree planting, rigging, engineering, falling and dry land sorts.

Like young workers in most industries, those in the forest industry are generally productive and eager to please — but with more than their share of compensation claims. Making up nine percent of our forestry labour force, young workers accounted for 38 percent of its time-loss claims last year. They recorded \$36.5 million² in claim costs and almost 80,000³ days lost from work in the five years ending 2004.

How are they hurt?

Based on 2000–2004 compensation statistics, these are the top three safety issues facing our young forestry workers.

- 25 percent of their injuries came from being hit by hand and power tools, trees or tree limbs and other objects — for \$15.3 million in claim costs and almost 28,000 days lost from work.
- 12 percent of young worker injuries involved falls from elevation — for \$2.7 million in claim costs and more than 10,000 days lost.
- 5 percent of their injuries resulted being caught by or in objects like logs and machinery — for \$3.6 million in claim costs and close to 7,000 days lost.

Why does this happen?

A major factor is who we're dealing with. Too often, young workers:

- ▶ Lack proper safety training
- ▶ Don't know their rights and responsibilities when it comes to workplace safety
- ▶ Aren't aware of on-the-job risks or how to protect themselves
- ▶ Take risks because of an it-won't-happen-to-me sense of being invincible
- ▶ Want to impress employers and so don't ask questions for fear of looking incompetent or losing their jobs

What can you do about it?

Remember those characteristics of young workers when putting procedures in place to comply with health and safety requirements. For most forestry operations, this means:

- ◆ Providing comprehensive training to make sure young workers recognize hazards and know how to handle them
- ◆ Training managers and supervisors to give young workers the instruction and direction they need, and following up to see how everyone's doing
- ◆ Creating an environment that recognizes and rewards safe behaviour, and encourages young workers to ask questions about their safety concerns

None of this is hard, and it all pays off. Keeping young workers safe and healthy keeps them productive, and it adds to your bottom line.

WorkSafeBC can help

Check these resources online at www2.worksafebc.com/Safety/Home.asp. Click on "Forestry" for material specific to your industry or on "Young Worker" for more general information.

Fatalities by occupation in the logging industry — A WorkSafeBC poster that graphically illustrates how many forest workers die annually.

Job Safety Procedures — A CD-Rom designed to help coastal logging companies develop, initiate and maintain effective occupational health and safety programs. Founded by WorkSafeBC, it was produced by the Truck Loggers Association and can be obtained by e-mailing office@truckloggers.com.

New Faller Training — Information on registration and the locations and timing of courses is sent to those calling toll-free to 1 877 324-1212.

General resources

Lost Youth Video — Four seriously injured young British Columbians discuss their on-the-job accidents and the permanent after-effects for them and their families. The stories of four lives forever altered are told through dramatic accident recreations and interviews with the young people and their parents.

The Supervisor Video — This docudrama examines the supervisor's responsibilities for workplace health and safety. It's the graphic depiction of the emotional, legal, and financial consequences of the death of a young worker.

Be a Survivor Magazine — Targeting teen workers, this colourful publication offers useful tips and on young worker safety. It's also a great resource for anyone in touch with youth: parents, educators, employers, and labour and community groups.

Getting a Job? Ask Questions about Safety — Created with the help from members of WorkSafeBC's Young Worker Advisory Group, this simple document contains practical tips on how to raise concerns about safety in the workplace.

¹ Source: Statistics Canada 2004 Labour Force Historical Review CD, CD1, Table Cd1T05an, Catalogue No. 71F0004XCB

² Claim cost paid represents total health care payments, short term disability payments, vocational rehabilitation payments, long term disability reserves and one-time cash awards, and survivor benefit reserves and one time cash awards charged in the year regardless of the year of injury

³ Total days lost represent total short term disability days and rehabilitation income continuity days paid in the year regardless of the year of injury