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THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY



June 26, 2007

WorkSafeBC
Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia
Prevention Policy & Regulation Review Department
Policy and Research Division
PO Box 5350 Station Terminal
Vancouver, BC
V6B 5L5

Object: Amendments to Part 4, General Conditions (with consequential amendments to Part 1, Definitions; Part 20, Construction, Excavation and Demolition; and Part 22, Underground Workings), relating to terrain stability and avalanche assessments, fills, and stockpiles;

The written comments contained herein are made on behalf of the Adventure Studies Department of Thompson Rivers University (TRU). In this submission TRU is an employer.

The Adventure Studies department at TRU has been offering adventure training since 1992 and is the largest post-secondary provider of professional guide training in British Columbia. TRU offers diplomas and degree studies in adventure. TRU, in collaboration with the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides (ACMG), is the sole provider of mountain guide training and certification in Canada; TRU does not set standards but trains to existing and recognized industry standards (many of them national and international).

TRU applauds WorkSafeBC's desire to improve worker safety and supports any initiative that advances worker safety. TRU believes that whatever improves the safety of workers will also improve the safety of clients (students) and vice versa. TRU offers its support to WorkSafeBC's current and future initiatives to improve worker safety.

TRU has become aware of the proposed changes to Part 4 of the General Conditions and would like to offer the following comments.

TRU has serious concerns regarding the proposed regulation changes.

- There has been no industry involvement in the development of the regulations.
- There is no evidence to the effect “qualified registered professionals” have the expertise, the willingness or the ability to undertake the avalanche assessments for a project of this magnitude; an entire sector in BC.
- There is no evidence on how the proposed changes would actually affect field practices and improve worker safety.
- No implementation process and timelines have been considered.
- The impact and feasibility of the regulation must be considered and addressed.
- Organizations will likely need to divert limited resources to the implementation of these regulations and potentially neglect other areas which might negatively impact worker safety.

TRU has questions and concerns regarding the wording of the proposed regulations:

- Section 4.1.1 (1) mentions that “if the terrain is at risk from a landslide or other unstable ground condition...” We are concerned that “other unstable ground condition” might inadvertently include such things a rock fall. If it is not the intention to cover events such as rock fall, then it should be clearly stated through a definition of “unstable ground condition”. If it is the intention to include “rock fall”, then the comments contained in this submission also apply to section 4.1.1 (1).
- Section 4.1.2 (1) “Appropriately qualified person” is vague. This is a critical role and the qualifications should be clearly stated.
- Section 4.1.2 (3) mentions that no work may be conducted “unless an avalanche risk watch is being conducted and the person conducting the avalanche risk watch determines that it is “safe” for people to work in the avalanche hazard area”. What is meant by safe? It will be very difficult for a person acting as the avalanche risk watch to be able to “certify” or “guarantee” that an area is safe. If the goal is not to ask for absolute safety but acceptable safety, then the question is: what risks will be acceptable to whom? Will the levels of acceptable risk be determined by WorkSafeBC, the public, employers, workers or qualified registered professionals?

TRU believes that the industry sector targeted by these regulations (employers and workers) needs to be involved in the development and implementation of such WorkSafe initiatives.

- Make use of exiting and recognized expertise, standards and industry best practices.
- Involvement of existing organizations that have some of the necessary expertise e.g. Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, Canadian Avalanche Association.

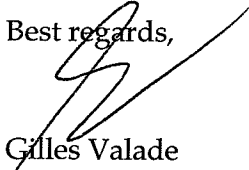
Our recommendation at this time is that the implementation of the proposed regulations be suspended until further work is done to address the questions and issues brought forth by TRU and other stakeholders.

TRU suggests the development of a formal working relationship between the sector targeted by these regulations and WorkSafeBC. This could be done through the formation of a working group with relevant stakeholder participation.

In summary, we would like to reiterate TRU's support of WorkSafeBC initiatives and offer of assistance however it may be needed.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Best regards,



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C.c. Dave Twynam, Dean - School of Tourism



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The written comments contained herein are made on behalf of the British Columbia Provincial Adventure Tourism Articulation Committee (ATC). In this submission ATC is an employer.

The ATC is an officially recognized provincial committee under the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfers. The ATC is comprised of the public and private post-secondary institutions offering adventure tourism programming in British Columbia. Most of the ATC institutions offer field related curriculum and are affected by the above mentioned amendments.

The ATC applauds WorkSafeBC's desire to improve worker safety and supports any initiative that advances worker safety. The ATC believes that whatever improves the safety of workers will also improve the safety of clients (students) and vice versa. The ATC offers its support to WorkSafeBC's current and future initiatives to improve worker safety.

The ATC has become aware of the proposed changes to Part 4 of the General Conditions and would like to offer the following comments.

The ATC has serious concerns regarding the proposed regulation changes.

- There has been no industry involvement in the development of the regulations.
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Our recommendation at this time is that the implementation of the proposed regulations be suspended until further work is done to address the questions and issues brought forth by the ATC and other stakeholders.

The ATC suggests the development of a formal working relationship between the sector targeted by these regulations and WorkSafeBC. This could be done through the formation of a working group with relevant stakeholder participation.

In summary we would like to reiterate The ATC 's support of WorkSafeBC initiatives and offer of assistance however it may be needed.

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Best regards,



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