

Site inspections for manual falling operations

What to expect and how to prepare

Safety inspections, both those conducted by WorkSafeBC officers and those conducted by employers themselves, are an important part of ensuring health and safety on your manual falling worksite. Our role at WorkSafeBC is to engage with you through education, consultation, and enforcement to help you identify hazards and put effective risk controls in place. This resource will help employers in manual falling operations prepare for and participate in an effective safety inspection.

Preparing for an officer to visit your site

The officer will require safe access into the active work area to complete the inspection. This means that you will need to shut down your work zone while the officer is present and ensure the safety of everyone within two tree-lengths of the inspection area. To help prevent exposures to communicable diseases, officers will take appropriate precautions and follow current protocols.

Conducting a site inspection

When an officer first enters the site, they will look at the layout of the timber, stump condition, and residual hazards, among other safety aspects. The following provides more detail about the steps and process WorkSafeBC officers take — but note that an inspection might be conducted in a different order, depending on current conditions.

Inspection fact-finding and observations	
1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer's role in the inspection Explanation of the Forestry High Risk Strategy and its focus on manual falling operations, including the types of incidents and injuries we want to prevent How the inspection will be conducted
2 Credentials review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of each faller's certification, experience, competency assessment, and supporting documentation
Faller training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determination of whether any workers are in the 30-day new faller training period or the following 180-day close supervision period following the initial training Confirmation of the trainer's credentials Review of the training program and progress, and determination of whether the program is acceptable to WorkSafeBC
3 Fall plan and hazard assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the supervisor engages and communicates with fallers Each faller's knowledge of site hazards and control measures to manage them safely and effectively Greater focus on falling activities with the most risk factors (e.g., blowdowns, poor forest health, old growth, steep ground, secondary harvesting activity)
4 Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency of supervisor's site visits Observations and questions asked by the supervisor Types of supports provided or corrective actions taken by the supervisor

Inspection fact-finding and observations

5 Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of each faller’s workmanship based on the BC Faller Training Standard and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (Regulation) • Review of each faller’s PPE and safety equipment
Observation of work practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, observation of each faller’s workmanship and falling practices (e.g., their assessment of the identified risks, and how they control risks during the falling process) • Assessment of each faller’s appropriate and effective use of the following controls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escaping from the base of the tree and taking cover • Watching for overhead hazards • Using a cutting sequence that ensures the tree detaches from the stump cleanly and avoids the risk of losing control or causing a barber chair • Review of each faller’s stumps for compliance with the <i>Workers Compensation Act</i> (Act) and Regulation.
Site preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of debris and escape trails, and whether dangerous trees and other hazards have been removed • Assessment of conditions and potential impacts on standing timber (e.g., brushing, and hidden hazards in the canopy)
Emergency response plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency response procedures, plan for summoning assistance, and access to qualified assistance • Compliance with procedures for checking the well-being of each faller every 30 minutes
6 Inspection findings and wrap-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of observations and any corrective actions needed by each faller • Explanation of the reporting process and compliance expectations, including any compliance actions needed after the inspection

As part of the inspection, the officer regularly engages with individuals in the following roles when further information is required.

Employer

- What is the employer doing to monitor their falling supervisor and take corrective actions when necessary?

Supervisor

- How does the falling supervisor make sure they are involved in the planning process and risk assessment?
- How does the falling supervisor make sure that effective controls are in place to manage the high-risk work of manual falling (i.e., managing and supervising to the level of risk)?
- Is the falling supervisor qualified (training, experience, etc.)?
- Does the falling supervisor have adequate time to do their work?
- Is the falling supervisor also working as a faller or doing other work at the site?

Prime contractor (PC)

- Is the PC qualified for manual falling and aware of the falling activities and falling plan? Are they aware of any new faller training or periods of close supervision being conducted on site?
- Did the PC plan and coordinate falling activities?
- Has the PC eliminated risks or controlled hazards, along with any threats of phase congestion?
- What does the PC have in place as a system or process to ensure manual falling complies with the Act and Regulation?

Licensee

- What is the licensee doing to make sure falling work and oversight of the work is properly planned and compliant with the Act and Regulation? Do they issue inspection reports and demand corrective actions of the appropriate parties when required?