



Gord Woodward

Since 1994, Gord has operated Enlightening Communications, which services clients in corporate communications and marketing. He spoke with Ray Harpur about working with tethered equipment in forestry (right) and with the Truck Loggers Association (page 16) about its 40-year history.



Helena Bryan

From writing about health and safety to creating documents for land treaties, Helena has a diverse history of telling B.C.'s stories. In our cover story, she looks into a roofing company that went from penalty-producer to safety advocate (page 7).



Marnie Douglas

Can kindness stop bullying in its tracks? In this issue, Marnie, a communications strategist, writer, and screenwriter, aims to find out (page 11).



Sarah Ripplinger

Sarah is a contract writer, journalist, editor, and marketing communication specialist from Vancouver, B.C. She spoke with speakers at WorkSafeBC's Ergonomics Forum about the ways employers can help reduce workplace fatigue (page 14).

Anchoring on steep slopes key to protecting workers



Ray Harpur Occupational safety officer

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Years on the job: 28

WorkSafeBC's 2018–2020 Forestry High Risk Strategy includes a focus on mechanized harvesting. Mechanized harvesting has unique risks that need to be addressed to create a safe workspace. In this edition, occupational safety officer Ray Harpur talks about keeping workers safe during steep slope logging.

Q. What are some of the common hazards to look for on steep slopes?

- A.** When I'm visiting a worksite, I always ask employers how steep the ground is, how stable it is, and how they are going to rescue a worker in an emergency.

I talk a lot about anchoring — how does this piece of equipment get tethered? The anchor has to be able to handle the weight it is assigned. Most equipment rollovers are caused by an initial loss of traction resulting in an uncontrolled gain in momentum. The anchor and tethering need to be able to support these forces.

I always recommend that supervisors walk the blocks and tell the operators about things that pose machine stability risks. Look for short drops, cliffs, gullies, and those kinds of things. A lot of harvesting is done in the dark and operators need to know where things are.

Q. What are some of the key considerations in a steep slope hazard-assessment plan?

- A.** The considerations that apply to traditional equipment also apply to tethered equipment. The assessment must be completed by a qualified person, work procedures have to be site-specific, and you need to have a pre-work meeting to brief operators on those procedures.

You also need to assess your machinery for the terrain. Make sure your machines are suited for the pitches and slopes. A rubber-tired machine, for example, can only take a 35 percent slope. Don't go over the manufacturers' recommendations or bad things can happen.

If you can't adequately control the stability risks, designate and map the area as a "no go" zone.

Employers should make sure to pull out the manufacturer's manual and review it. There are quite a few different manufacturers and they all have different safe work procedures.

Finally, emergency escape has to be part of the plan. How are you going to get a worker out of there? Make sure your secondary access door can be opened if the machine rolls over, and that it can be opened without a tool.

Q. As a machine operator, what kinds of safety precautions should I take to protect myself?

- A.** Do you wear your seatbelt every time? Have you secured everything in the cab? If you have an accident, loose items can hit you. Where do you keep your thermos, for example? That thing can be a missile.

When you're getting out of the cab, or moving around assessing the equipment, always use three points of contact. Steel can be slippery when it's wet or cold. Make sure the laces are done up on your footwear to help prevent slips, trips, and falls.

Where you park the equipment is important. Think about gravity if you park on a hill. The machine could roll if you don't set the brake or use a chock block. Don't get out of a machine if it's not stable. Stay put and call for assistance.

Q. What tips can you provide for maintenance, repairs, and lockout?

- A.** Lots of maintenance jobs require lockout, and I've handled two very serious incidents related to inadequate lockout. You have to explain to workers what lockout entails. Every time operators move from equipment to equipment, the lockout systems can change.

Avoid doing maintenance and making repairs while the machine is on a steep slope. Move it to a stable location first. If that's not possible, lower the boom, blade, or attachments, and release loads if it's safe to do so, to increase stability. Look for hazards like debris or partially cut trees. Engage and confirm lockout procedures, then only make the repairs necessary to allow you to move the machine to a flat site.

Always make sure tracks and rails are tight, and check the tilt-cab mechanism. You've also got to check the tieback ropes.

Q. What safety hazards often get overlooked?

- A.** One of the most dangerous things that every forestry worker does is drive to work. Read and follow the road signs. Check your channel. Call the given kilometre and wait for the answers before you charge ahead. And always drive to the posted speeds and conditions of the road.

Q. Where can I get more information on steep slope harvesting safety?

- A.** BC Forest Safety Council (bcforestsafesafe.org) has a resource package that includes a risk assessment and site pre-work form, safe work practices, and information on planning and operational responsibilities. It also includes a steep slope logging checklist developed by WorkSafeBC.

[Worksafebc.com](http://worksafebc.com) has free resources too, including hazard alerts and handbooks.

Looking for answers to your specific health and safety questions? Send them to us at worksafemagazine@worksafebc.com, and we'll consider them for our next "Ask an officer" feature. ☺

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