

SAFER Mental Health First Aid Workshops



SAFER recently held Mental Health First Aid workshops in Kelowna and Nanaimo. Seen above is the workshop held in Kelowna. Over 40 labour and management forest industry employees attended the social distanced workshops conducted by the Mental Health Commission of Canada..

People spend a great deal of time at work and the negative implications of financial and human costs related to workplace mental health issues can be huge. Mental health issues have broad reaching affects that span from work life to personal life which ultimately impact your enjoyment of life.

We know that isolation and loneliness are common consequences of mental health conditions and can be intensified by imposed quarantines due to COVID-19. We also know that mental illnesses are one of the leading causes of disability. At least 1 in 5 Canadians will experience mental health issues in their lifetime and most will not seek help for these very treatable illnesses because they lack information and are afraid of stigma.

To help address this, SAFER worked with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) conducting Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) workshops in both Kelowna and Nanaimo. The MHFA program aims to improve mental health literacy and provide the skills and knowledge to help people better manage potential or developing mental health problems in themselves, a family member, friend or colleague.

Using larger venues, SAFER was able to ensure social distancing was in place and face masks were used when appropriate. Over 40 union and management workers from the forest industry attended the two-day workshops. Some of the comments from the participants were: Grace Cox, the Human Resource Manager at

COVID 19
Province-wide restrictions
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John Bulcock Retires From SAFER



SAFER recently recognized the contribution that the retiring Western Forest Products (WFP) corporate manager of health and safety John Bulcock (L) made for improving health and safety in the forest industry. WFP manager of health & safety Derek Nelson, who replaced John on SAFER, presents John with a token of SAFER's appreciation. John was always willing to help lead many of the SAFER initiatives during his tenure on the SAFER Council.

Canadian Forest Products said: *"Excellent course to help give a person the skills and knowledge to offer first aid intervention and find the appropriate resources that a person in crisis might need."*

Jeff Roos, the President at Interior Forest Labour Relations Association stated: *"The Mental Health First Aid Workshop was very enlightening and helpful to begin to understand how to assist those struggling with mental health related illness, just as we strive to assist those with physical related illnesses. I highly recommend this course to others as a way to deepen our ability to help others and create an open environment to assist people as early as possible in getting the help they require, to be fully healthy and present."*

Pat McGregor the President of USW Local 1-423 in Kelowna summed up the workshops by saying: *"On behalf of SAFER, I want to thank the CMHA and the participants, both management and hourly, for making the 2 day event successful and we look forward to sponsoring more of these events. Having a combination of HR, managers, supervisors and workers, we were able to get a broader perspective in the day to day dealings with people who may be struggling with mental health issues."*



HAZARD ALERT

Injury: Fractured vertebrae

Industry: Forestry

Core Activity: Manual tree falling and bucking

Location: Vancouver Island/Coastal B.C.

A hand faller, working on a road reactivation project, had placed falling cuts in a tree (12 inches in diameter). As the tree started to fall, the faller cleared down their escape trail and turned around to watch for hazards. A thinner tree (5 inches in diameter), about 15 metres away, uprooted and fell uphill, striking the faller. First aid was administered on site before the worker was flown to hospital.

Injury: Injury to head

Industry: Manufacturing - Wood & Paper Products

Core Activity: Sawmill

Location: Lower Mainland

An 8-foot-long cant (8 by 8 inches) fell through a double arbor outfeed deck and struck a worker underneath.

Injury: Fatal

Industry: Forestry

Core Activity: Tree planting or cone picking

Location: Northern B.C.

A silviculture worker missed their scheduled check-in. The employer initiated a search and the vehicle was found overturned down an embankment on a resource road. The worker was found to be deceased.

Injury: Crush injuries to foot

Industry: Manufacturing - Wood & Paper Products

Core Activity: Sawmill

Location: Lower Mainland

A worker was performing maintenance on a double cut-off saw/ring debarker. The worker was testing the machine when one of the worker's feet was caught in a log kicker that had inadvertently turned on.

Injury: Contusions and abrasions (1 worker)

Industry: Forestry

Core Activity: Integrated forest management

Location: Interior B.C.

A yarding crew was repositioning a grapple yarder, with the guylines and haulback line slacked and attached to anchors. As the yarder was moved down the road, the haulback pulled the yarder over, and it toppled off the road and down a steep (74 percent) embankment. The operator tried to jump off the overturning yarder and landed on the guardrail. The cab of the yarder was undamaged. The injured worker was treated by the employer's first aid attendant and transported to hospital.

Injury: Laceration to head

Industry: Forestry

Core Activity: Dry land sort

Location: Lower Mainland

In a log sorting ground, a worker operating a rubber-tired log loader drove into a pothole and hit their head on the windshield of the loader. The worker was treated on site by a Level 3 first aid attendant, then transported to hospital by ambulance.

Managing Workplace Fatigue Calls for Review of Workers' Tasks

Employers can improve workplace safety by following a three-step process to identify and manage tasks that can be particularly affected by fatigue.

Unfortunately, many of us are not getting enough sleep. We may try to go to bed early or put up light-blocking curtains, but this doesn't always help. Without enough sleep, people can end up fatigued at work.

"Fatigue has implications for performance in terms of memory, communication, reaction time, vigilance, and perceiving your work environment, which can have potentially detrimental effects," says Heather Kahle, a human factors specialist at WorkSafeBC. Fatigue is a form of impairment WorkSafeBC's information sheet Fatigue in the workplace compares the number of hours awake to blood alcohol content (BAC) in terms of causing impairment.

Research shows the following:

- 17 hours awake is equivalent to a BAC of 0.05 (B.C.'s legal limit for operating a motor vehicle)
- 21 hours awake is equivalent to a BAC of 0.08 (Canada's legal limit for operating a motor vehicle)
- 24 to 25 hours awake is equivalent to a BAC of 0.10

Heather says that certain tasks are particularly affected by fatigue. "Employers need to conduct an assessment to identify and understand which tasks require a lot of memory, attention, safety, critical communication, or quick reaction time. These elements of a task are particularly affected by fatigue and may be more susceptible to error." She points out that fatigue is inevitable and normal, and there are many things employers can do to manage the risk of fatigue.

Managing the risk of fatigue in the workplace

Employers are responsible for identifying, assessing, and controlling risks that may be escalated by the presence of fatigue in their workplace. These three steps are part of managing the risk of harm at work, as outlined on WorkSafeBC's Managing risk webpage.

To start, look at each hazardous task and consider:

- Does it need to be done?
- Can it be redesigned or can aspects of it be improved to lessen the risk?
- Can it be carried out at a different time, avoiding times when workers' drive for sleep is greatest?

Although each workplace is different, incidents tend to occur more often on night shifts, during extended shifts, and when breaks are inadequate.

More information about managing workplace fatigue can also be found in the [Guide for Managing the Risk of Fatigue](#) at Work from Safe Work Australia and [Fatigue impairment](#) from WorkSafeBC.

[Courtesy Speaking of Safety](#)

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