

HARVESTING SAFELY ON THE COAST: CURRENT CHAG ISSUES

The Coast Harvesting Advisory Group (CHAG) companies and their contractors continue to work on a variety of safety issues that affect contractors on BC's coast.

Certified Falling Supervisors

CHAG continues to work towards having all falling supervisors certified from a safety perspective. The original plan—to have certification in place for all supervisors by the end of 2014—was not achievable for a variety of reasons including training limitations. All of the CHAG licensees (except BCTS) have set timelines for completion of this goal and all will be complete before the end of 2015. CHAG is still working to decide how this commitment applies to small crews such as right-of-way fallers and how it might

apply if a falling contractor from the BC Interior or from out-of-province were to come to the coast. It is likely that the CHAG companies, with support from their contractors, will ask the BC Forest Safety Council to include falling supervision certification in SAFE Company audits in the future.

A formal program for re-certification of fallers is still in development but will probably be linked to audits that will be carried out by certified falling supervisors. Program development will be complete by the end of 2015. In the meantime, re-certification of some fallers who have lost certification credentials is underway.

Emergency Helicopter Evacuation

Work with the BC Ambulance Service,

rural physicians and federal search and rescue personnel regarding emergency helicopter evacuation continues. Improvements have been made but easy access to search and rescue is still elusive. A meeting of the committee leading this work will occur with Vancouver Island MP, John Duncan, to discuss how progress might be made through political avenues. Our long-term goal is still to have a dedicated helicopter available for this type of work.

Fit-to-Fall Initiatives

Fit-to-fall initiatives involving fatigue, nutrition and hydration have been well accepted in the falling community. There are some concerns about the cost of such programs to licensees and/or contractors so work is underway to determine less



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expensive ways to deliver such programs. CHAG has also asked the BC Forest Safety Council to examine how these activities might be extended to yarding, trucking, road building and other phases associated with coastal harvesting.

Danger Tree Assessment

Danger tree assessment continues to be worked on. Activities include the possibility of a formal course that might be used to train specialists, falling supervisors or maybe even in the training of new fallers. We are considering whether or not permanent certification is viable or whether periodic re-certification is needed. SAFER is preparing a video that will be used as part of training and as a periodic reminder of the importance of danger tree recognition and decision-making. Issues associated with danger tree blasting such as shared powder magazine use and transportation of explosives continue to be worked on.

Steep Slope Harvesting

Mechanized harvesting on steep slopes continues to be evaluated with several different machines and machine configurations being examined. At the same time, evaluations of the possibility of lighter loads such as blocks to be carried by personnel who have to climb steep slopes to get cables in place are also being made. Use of helicopters, often in place for other activities, to ferry equipment to tops of slopes is also increasing in frequency.

Training and Feedback

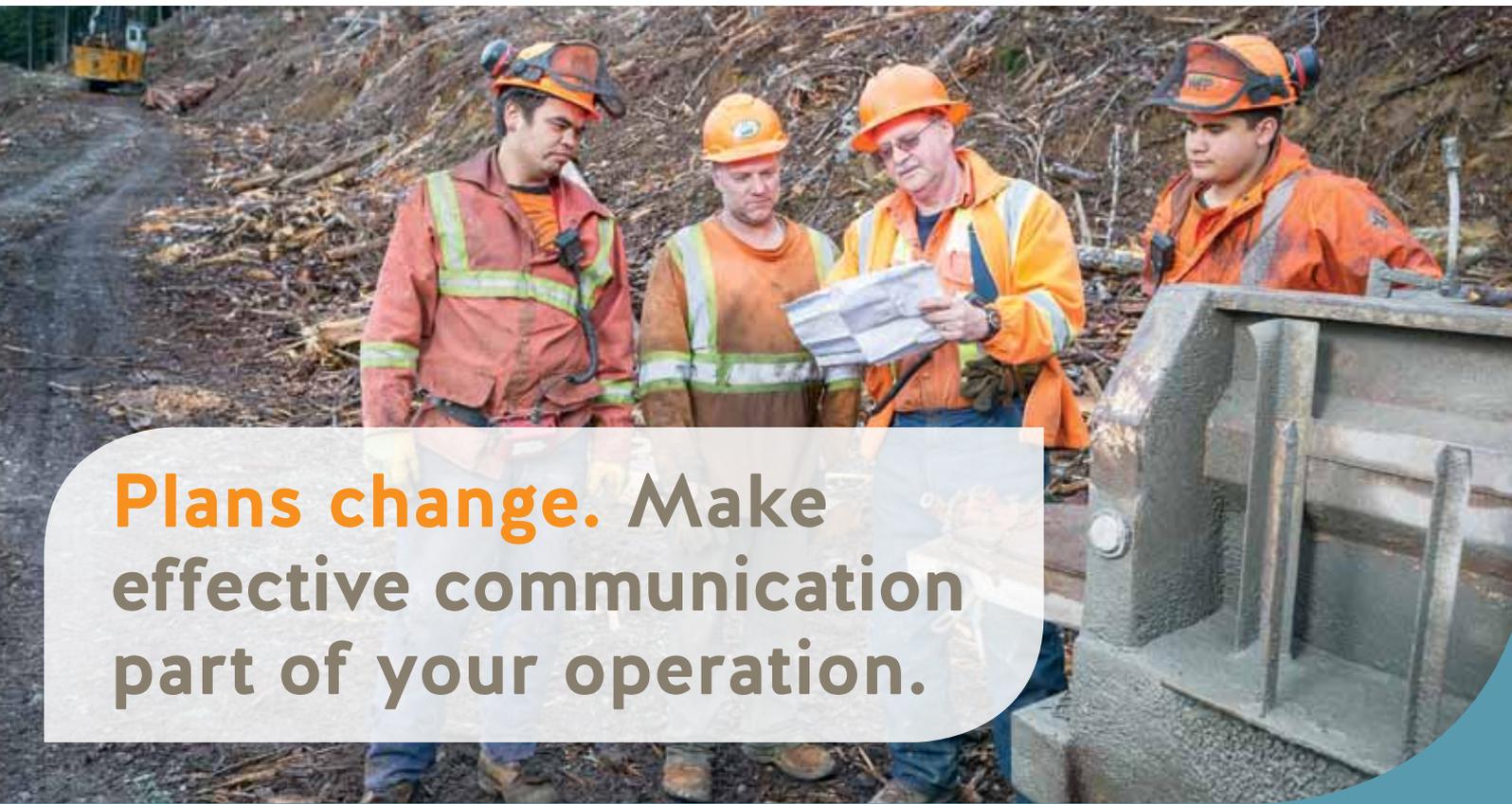
CHAG is also studying the question of what the term “qualified” means in relation to employees involved in a variety of harvesting activities. The question has implications for training modules, frequency of training, certification and legal situations that may arise. These discussions will also be valuable to work being carried out to attract the next generation of workers in the coastal harvesting sector.

Many other initiatives are underway in this work but, in every case, CHAG members are concerned about how to engage non-CHAG licensees and contractors in the effort. Ideas on how to effectively do this are always appreciated.

More About CHAG

The Coast Harvesting Advisory Group (CHAG) is comprised of representatives from Western Forest Products, Interfor, TimberWest, Island Timberlands, BC Timber Sales, United Steelworkers Union and the Truck Loggers Association. CHAG continues to make progress on many initiatives designed to reduce fatalities and serious injuries in all phases of harvesting activities in coastal British Columbia. As always, the members of CHAG thank staff from the BC Forest Safety Council for outstanding work in development and implementation of these safety initiatives. 🌲

Ken Higginbotham is a Project Manager. Questions or comments about the work of CHAG are welcome and can be directed to him at higgassoc@gmail.com.



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