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## **Forestry deaths dropping**

2009 recorded the fewest deaths in B.C. timber harvesting, including hauling, in the last quarter century - four direct fatalities, compared with at least 10 every other year, says the BC Forest Safety Council.

Although only about 47 million cubic meters of timber was harvested in 2009 compared with the 75-million m<sup>3</sup> average, no prior year had less than a single fatality per 10 million m<sup>3</sup>. From 1994 to 2004, an average of 22 forestry workers were killed each year. From 2006 to 2009, the average number of deaths each year was 11 -- half of what it was previously. Safety Council CEO Reynold Hert says regular discussion of how to operate injury-free is leading to creative solutions to longstanding problems.

## **WSBC fines at \$4.5 million**

WorkSafe B.C. handed out a record of almost \$4.5 million in fines to employers for safety violations last year. 211 penalties were levied against 190 employers for a total of \$4,465,313. That breaks the old record of \$4,256,516 imposed for 221 penalties in 2007.

Companies in construction-related groups received 58.7% of the fines imposed in 2009, the agency said. The steep-slope roofing group accounted for 29% of penalties and fines against house or wood-frame general contracting were 10% of the total.

## **New head for forestry board**

Al Gorley, a professional forester with a long career with the Ministry of Forests and Range in positions in Houston, Prince George, and Victoria, has been appointed Chair of the Forest Practices Board. Currently a part-time board member, Gorley will begin his three-year term May 1 as head of the agency that is the public watchdog over industry compliance with forest practices legislation.



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## **Workshops offer help for employers**

Workshops galore are coming up for resource contractors over the next several weeks, and many of them are free. Here are some that should be of particular interest to the logging sector:

A two-day course for on-scene commercial vehicle incident investigation will be held in Prince George April 12/13. It's all about managing your company's liability more effectively, and will cover collision investigation process, access to information, field sketches, analysis and other aspects of injury-causing or fatal crashes. It costs \$595 plus GST, seating is very limited, and the registration deadline is March 26. For information, call Melissa at 604-847-9933.

Another workshop, also planned for Prince George on April 14, is aimed at providing small and medium-sized fleet trucking operations with good information on how to reduce driver turnover and recruit new drivers. It's put on by the Asia Pacific Gateway Skills Table through the BC Trucking Association. For more information, call 800-565-2282.

WorkSafe BC is also offering a series of seminars in Prince George starting April 8 and running through to mid-May. Topics to be covered include due diligence for employers, accident investigation, claims management, risk assessment, young and new worker orientation and OHS program requirements. More information is on the web at [www.labour.gov.bc.ca/eao/](http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/eao/)



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## **Power plants hang on fibre cost, access**

Pristine Power executive vice-president Harvie Campbell told a bio-energy conference in Prince George last week that his company is ready to develop bioenergy plants at Mackenzie, Burns Lake, Fort St. James and Merritt, but first needs to see some clarity on access to and cost of the fibre feed source.

Sawmill residues, roadside debris from logging activities and degraded pine beetle stands are the primary inputs for the proposed power plants, he said. If a sawmill shuts down and cuts off the supply of residues, those input costs can go from \$20-30 per megawatt to \$70-80 per megawatt.

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## **Canfor contract offers profit-sharing**

Workers at 14 Canfor mills across B.C. have ratified a new four-year contract that the company says offers relief from current economic problems, with the reward later of a profit based performance bonus for hourly employees.

The contract, retroactive to last July, contains no immediate wage increases, but will give workers 2% increases in years three and four.

The union agreed to defer some holiday and vacation pay as an incentive for Canfor to invest in equipment to upgrade its sawmills, while workers laid off in partial mill shutdowns will get more severance protection.

The union said in a note to its members that it agreed to the concessions as an alternative to wage rollbacks, and there is the possibility of profit-sharing in the future.

The contract is expected to set the pattern for negotiations with other forest companies, including West Fraser, Tolko, Tembec and AbitibiBowater.

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