

Intro

At WorkSafeNB, we recognize that everything involved with working in the woods has the potential to be very dangerous because of the highly hazardous nature of this industry.

Taking time in the beginning to learn how to do your job right will pay off in the long run – **work smarter, not harder**. Knowing and recognizing hazards that exist, knowing the proper way to perform each task, and knowing what to do in case of an emergency is the best way to avoid injury and mishap. The most important rule is **if you don't know, ASK!**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Workers **must** wear the required PPE according to the work hazards, the employer's requirements, and the legislative requirements. Workers have to demonstrate appropriate use and care of the forestry specific PPE, which may include:

- Steel-toed boots with chainsaw protection
- Hard hats
- Hearing protection
- Eye and face protection
- Gloves
- Chainsaw safety pants

Forestry First Aid

Every worksite is required, under law, to stock adequate first aid supplies in a central location and have at least **one employee qualified** to administer first aid. Before you begin your new job, make sure you know your communication and evacuation plan, who the qualified first aid provider is, and where the first aid supplies are located. Contact with blood and other bodily fluids is always a hazard for first aid providers, who must follow their training to prevent this occurrence.



Some forestry workers are allergic to insect bites. These employees should look into desensitization treatments with their physician, and must carry an *EpiPen*® or other epinephrine auto-injector kit with them at all times. Employers should include an *EpiPen*® in their first aid kit, in case of an unexpected allergic reaction. Anyone who may be required to administer the device should be trained to do so.

Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS)

Know how to **safely** use the woodlands controlled products (gas, grease, oil) and where the Material Data Safety Sheets (MSDS) are located. Take time to familiarize yourself with the information provided on the WHMIS labels and the MSDS. Handle products using the proper procedures and PPE indicated on the label. Remember, if there is something you don't know or don't understand, **ASK!**

Woodlands and Highway Driving Safety

Be aware of the various forestry driving hazards. Some examples include: road conditions, seasonal concerns (snow, ice and dust), ATVs, off-road and oversized vehicles, animals, and vegetation.

Be prepared by carrying emergency supplies and a first aid kit. Ensure you have a reliable communication method, be aware of the safe stopping areas, and respect signage and the posted speed limits. Never stop on a narrow road or a bridge. All vehicular laws, such as seatbelt usage and not driving while impaired, apply on woodlands roads.

By law, headlights must be used at all times on woodlands roads. Drivers must communicate with other vehicles in the woodlands by using the appropriate designated radio system and the assigned channel. Tools, chemicals and pressurized canisters must be secured in the vehicle (located outside the passenger cabin).

Environmental Exposures

Every worker must know and understand environmental risks, symptoms and prevention measures as they apply to:

- Extremes of **heat and cold**
- Various **weather conditions** (wind, heavy snow or rain)
- **Wildlife** encounters (raccoons, moose, bears)
- **Lightning** storms
- **West Nile virus**
- **Lyme disease**

In **cold weather**, dress in layers and cover all skin surfaces. Keep a dry change of clothes on hand and ensure regular rest breaks sheltered from the wind. Do not consume alcoholic beverages, as they encourage heat loss.

In **warm weather**, dress in light, natural fibre fabric. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing clothing and headwear, and applying sunscreen regularly to exposed skin. Drink plenty of fluids and replace vitamins and minerals lost through perspiration by drinking sports drinks or diluted orange juice, and by eating salty snacks. Know the signs of heat stress and

take shelter from the heat or request help if you are feeling nauseated, dizzy or have muscular or stomach cramps. Since undetected or untreated heat stress can quickly lead to fainting and even death, prevention is essential.

Report any rapidly changing **weather conditions** to your supervisor, who may temporarily suspend operations. Wind is especially dangerous in woodlands operations as it can be unpredictable, depending on the location and the overhead hazards.

When working in the forestry sector, you are likely to encounter **wildlife**. While many encounters may be pleasant, some can be extremely dangerous. Raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes are commonly infected with rabies, so if an animal is encountered, stay clear. Observe them from a safe distance and notify the proper authorities if they exhibit unusual behaviour or do not fear humans. Moose can also be very aggressive, depending on the time of year. Know how to react to ensure your safety should you encounter a moose.

Bears pose a particular hazard in woodlands. Some employers provide noisemakers or bear spray to their forestry staff. You need to be extremely alert to this dangerous animal if you are working alone. Ask your employer for information and training on avoiding and reacting to a bear encounter.

With all animal encounters, be sure to advise your employer of problem animals and they should, in turn, advise the local forest ranger.

When **lightning** strikes remember the 30-30 rule. Once you see lightning, begin counting until you hear the thunder. If there is less than 30 seconds between both, take shelter immediately. Do not return outdoors until 30 minutes after the last lightning strike.

West Nile virus is a disease present in birds that can be transmitted to humans from the bite of an infected mosquito. Therefore, it is very important to protect all exposed skin from mosquito bites and to use an insect repellent regularly. It is best to spray the repellent on clothing rather than on your skin. Repellent should have no more than 30% DEET content.

Lyme disease is transmitted by an infected tick. Exposed skin must be protected. Workers must examine skin surfaces (particularly the head, scalp, and behind the ears) for the presence of ticks. If one is found it must be removed with tweezers. Pants should be tucked into socks and boots, and shirts should be tucked into pants.

Working Around Powered Mobile Equipment

Workers need to ensure the operator of any type of forestry equipment has **seen** and **acknowledged** their presence. Wait for a signal from the operator before moving closer to the equipment. Each piece of powered mobile equipment has its dangers (pinch points, articulating parts, blind spots, etc.). Be sure you are familiar with the operation and hazards of a machine before you approach it. It is illegal to hitch a ride on a piece of powered mobile equipment.

Fall Arrest

It is against the law to work at a height greater than three metres without fall restraint for fall protection. This includes working on top of loaded trucks or large pieces of forestry equipment. Ask questions, get the training you need and use your protective equipment.

Lock Out/Tag Out/Block Out/Guarding

Before working on a piece of equipment (whether to clean, adjust or repair), the machine must be in a **zero energy state and locked out**. Ensure you know the lock out provisions as they apply to the machinery, tools and equipment you are using.

Equipment must have proper **guarding**. Never use a tool that has had its guard removed or modified.

Never work under a piece of equipment that has not been blocked. Pieces of equipment that are elevated in the woods are usually on soil that can slide or compact. Jacks have also been known to slip, so it is **essential** that equipment is properly blocked.

Working Alone

Employees working alone in forestry operations must know and adhere to the established call-in procedure. This usually involves reporting to a designated number at least **every two hours**, or whenever you leave your piece of powered mobile equipment or vehicle. If you do not call in, the communications centre should try to reach you. If there is no response, help must be dispatched immediately.

Employees working with chainsaws, brush saws or clearing saws are not permitted, by regulation, to work alone.

For more information about health and safety, call WorkSafeNB at 1 800 222-9775, or visit us online at www.worksafenb.ca.



WORKING SAFELY IN THE WOODS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

