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**AFAG 07/03**

## **ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG) COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT GROUP (D1)**

### **AFAG COMMUNICATIONS – STRATEGIC REVIEW**

#### **Summary**

1. This paper describes current and potential methods to communicate with and influence those working in the arboriculture and forestry industries. Members are asked to discuss and comment on this comprehensive review of existing methods and options outlined for the future. These are to be prioritised to enable a ‘delivery plan’ to be produced for AFAG - working with HSE - to reduce fatalities and ill health in these and associated industries.

#### **Background**

2. The aims/objectives of AFAG Project Group D1 are:
- To build on the success of the ‘Management of H&S in Forestry’ initiative in forestry and extend this approach into arboriculture, through provision of guidance and effective communications.
  - To develop and implement an effective communication strategy for the promotion and adoption of good practice in the arboriculture and forestry industries.
  - To exploit synergies through joint working across Government Departments and agencies and with key industry stakeholders, to improve the well-being of workers in these sectors.
  - To develop, implement and evaluate innovative and cost-effective intervention methodologies to contribute to HSE’s Strategic Programmes and HSE’s PSA targets, eg using Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) aimed at Forestry Works Managers and contractors, and key client groups in arboriculture.
3. The project group has not been formally convened, but the attached paper (Appendix 1) is intended to initiate the debate on the options. It is obviously not possible to deliver all of these options simultaneously. AFAG members are therefore invited to consider the Action Points and to identify and agree what is practical and realistic. These then need to be prioritised to enable a ‘delivery plan’ to be devised - with anticipated timescales for completion - which complements and enhances the impact of AFAG’s production of industry guidance, research programme and other

work, whilst dove-tailing within HSE's overall Communications Strategy.

4. The proposals aim to take forward the successes achieved previously, eg through the "Management of Health and Safety in Forestry" initiative and more recently, in promoting AFAG/HSE's work in the trade and other media and through the delivery of Forestry and Arboriculture Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) during 2005-2007.

5. This paper considers the implications of HSE's current publications policy and potential developments in e-communications methods. The proposals also aim to further develop and better utilize web-based technologies available to AFAG/HSE now and in the future.

5. The current suite of AFAG leaflets and other relevant HSE and industry guidance is being reviewed by AFAG Project Group D2, '*Production, review and maintenance of AFAG, HSE and industry guidance*'. A separate paper (AFAG 07/03) will be presented to AFAG, summarising the position regarding availability of leaflets, those produced, reviewed/revised or reprinted since 2005/06 and proposals for future production.

#### **Actions/Recommendations**

6. Members are invited to:
- a) Note the progress made to date;
  - b) Discuss and offer any comment, in particular on the Action Points and:
  - c) Identify and agree which options are practical and realistic;
  - d) Prioritise the agreed options to enable a 'delivery plan' to be devised, with anticipated timescales for completion;
  - e) Advise whether any other stakeholder organisations in arboriculture and forestry can be identified to help drive the initiative forward, and
  - f) Support its implementation.

**ARBORICULTURE AND FORESTRY ADVISORY GROUP (AFAG)  
COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT GROUP (D1)**

**PROPOSAL FOR AN OVERARCHING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY  
FOR AFAG AND HSE**

**OBJECTIVE**

1. AFAG Project Group D1 was charged with producing an effective communication strategy for the promotion and adoption of good practice in the arboriculture and forestry industries, to help reduce fatalities, injuries and ill health in these and associated industries, to:

- build on the success of the ‘Management of Health & Safety in Forestry’ initiative and extend this approach into arboriculture, through provision of guidance and effective communications;
- develop and implement an effective communication strategy for the promotion and adoption of good practice in the arboriculture and forestry industries;
- exploit synergies through joint working across Government Departments and agencies and with key industry stakeholders, to improve the well-being of workers in these sectors, and
- develop, implement and evaluate innovative and cost-effective intervention methodologies to contribute to HSE’s Strategic Programmes and HSE’s PSA targets, eg using Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs) aimed at Forestry Works Managers and contractors, and key client groups in arboriculture.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The following proposals are designed to complement and enhance the impact of AFAG’s production of industry guidance, research programme and other work. The proposals aim to take forward the successes achieved in 2006-2007 in promoting AFAG and HSE’s work in the trade and other media and through the delivery of Forestry and Arboriculture Safety and Health Awareness Days (SHADs). They also aim to further develop and better utilize the current suite of IT and web-based technologies available to AFAG and HSE now and in the future.

3. As such it needs to fit within HSE Agriculture Sector’s Communications Strategy and all communications should reflect HSC’s key communication messages as detailed in HSC and HSE’s overall communication strategy. These are:

- Sensible health and safety is a cornerstone of a civilized society.
- Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.

- The people best placed to make workplaces safer from harm are the staff and managers who work in them. They do this best by working together.
- HSE is committed to being a good partner – working with others to improve health and safety.

4 These messages correlate well with the long-standing culture of AFAG and the Agriculture Sector. They are already reflected in the current suite of AFAG guidance leaflets and AFAG is committed to continue to promote them. The Agriculture Sector has received positive feedback from HSE's Chief Executive (Geoffrey Podger) on the success of AFAG and the Sector in promoting these key messages in 2006 and we should build on this and our other numerous successes.

## OPTIONS

### A. CONTINUING TO PROMOTE AND RAISE AWARENESS OF CURRENT GUIDANCE

5 **AFAG Leaflets** - HSE, in partnership with the industry through AFAG, has made significant improvements in H&S standards in both arboriculture and forestry in recent years. The production and maintenance of the AFAG suite of guidance leaflets has been key to this success. These were previously supported financially by the industry through FASTCo, and the Forestry Commission (FC) in particular, before falling to HSE to publish. They now form a critical part of the workplan of AFAG, which has been agreed and endorsed by AIAC.

6 AFAG guides are accepted both nationally and internationally as an authoritative and reliable source of best practice. They also form part of almost all company safety policies and risk assessments nationally and are accepted by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Natural Heritage as giving guidance to land managers under the public access legislation. They are also used to support a significant number of other publications produced outside HSE, including the new Forestry Stewardship Code being produced by the Forestry Commission.

7. Printed copies of AFAG leaflets are demanded by the industry because they are used almost universally as a checklist by work supervisors to ensure best practice is being followed on site and are integrated into all industry-training courses. Lantra Awards, NPTC and other training bodies buy a substantial number of leaflets each year to support their training programmes.

8. These leaflets underpin the HSE strategy for priority hazard topics and are directly relevant to the major sources of ill health and injury in the tree work sector (inc. transport, falls from height, manual handling/MSD, noise) and the overarching policy of reducing the number of fatal and serious non-fatal accidents. The current suite of AFAG leaflets and other relevant HSE and industry guidance is being reviewed by AFAG Project Group D2 - ***Production, review and maintenance of AFAG, HSE and industry guidance*** - and a separate paper will be presented to AFAG, summarising the position regarding available stocks and proposals for future production.

9. In many cases these leaflets were written by or in conjunction with the industry and any small cost of final editing and design is usually met by HSE in the initial production runs. To maintain their efficacy and credibility it is essential to ensure the guides address recent changes in work practices and legislation and must therefore be revised when necessary. Necessary revisions are generally small and can usually be addressed at reprint, but any new publication or those requiring substantial revisions now require approval by an HSE Board member before work proceeds.

10. Many tree work companies are small and hard to reach. Therefore, AFAG and HSE continue to develop new and innovative ways of promoting and delivering guidance to all the industry. For example, the Agriculture Sector are currently developing an initiative to work in partnership with the insurance industry. The AFAG Communications Group have also received a proposal aiming to raise the insurance industry's awareness of the current legal requirements in relation to tree work and the economic benefits (in relation to the high cost of workplace accidents) of adhering to AFAG's good practice guidance. Insurance brokers would be encouraged to include AFAG guidance leaflets and other relevant HSE guidance (eg Working at Height, PPE, LOLER, PUWER, COSHH, HAV, Noise, First Aid, Risk Assessment), as well as details of trade bodies and other sources of help (such as NPTC, Lantra Awards, Lantra Sector Skills Council, FC and HSE) as part of their annual insurance renewal package sent to contractors. (See AFAG 06/05 for more detail).

#### **ACTION POINT 1**

11 AFAG has also proposed further measures to improve the delivery of its guidance, including the production of a single guidance document (modelled on the successful HSE publications 'Essentials of Health and Safety' and 'Farmwise'). This exercise would probably be too costly for HSE in the current economic climate but could be facilitated by obtaining sponsorship from industry - including potentially the insurance sector noted above.

#### **ACTION POINT 2**

12 Informal discussions between the Ag Sector and the forestry industry have also shown willingness on the part of industry to sponsor new initiatives, such as the production of a CD-ROM containing all the AFAG leaflets and other relevant guidance. The Ag Sector have also received a proposal from Australia to joint fund the production of further AFAG guidance, on the basis that they would use them widely for training and to set standards in the tree work industry there.

#### **ACTION POINT 3**

13 The quality of the AFAG suite of guidance leaflets and their impact in reducing accidents, is recognised internationally. The proposal from Australia noted above supports that and recently permission to re-produce the guides has been requested by a number of countries, including Italy and Spain. In addition, the AFAG suite follows on from the well recognised FASTCo guides which were translated into Spanish and used by Shell International on many of their work sites in South America.

The ILO guide on worker safety uses diagrams and text from FASTCo material so we can assume that in time this may well be updated using AFAG material.

14 AFAG recognises that the profile of those working in the treework industry within the UK is changing rapidly. An increasing number of migrant workers, particularly from within the EU, are employed in this sector leading to an urgent need for translated versions of the leaflets. These need to be bi- or multilingual to enable English-speaking managers to work successfully with migrant workers whose first language may not be English.

15 Members may be aware that the Rural Development Initiative (RDI) in Scotland has already produced Polish translations of a number of AFAG Guidance Leaflets. These are in the process of further verification but are currently available to the industry as pdf versions of a 'MS Word' document from the RDI. As such they lack the formatting and structure of current UK AFAG guides. However, initial discussions with a number of bodies suggests that funding may be available (from both the EU and organisations such as IOSH) to fund both the translation of guides into other languages and to cover the design costs associated with producing them in the AFAG format.

16 A policy on translation and a method to ensure quality and consistency of text is therefore needed. This work dovetails with the objectives of HSE's current Migrant Workers In Agriculture Programme and Members are requested to support the further development of this initiative.

#### **ACTION POINTS 4 + 5**

17 **Forestry and Arboriculture SHADs** – These events continue to provide an important platform where AFAG and HSE guidance can be communicated in a practical setting directly and effectively (as verified by independent evaluation by Bomel of the recent forestry SHADs) to managers, contractors and operators involved in tree work. The content of the SHADs are developed directly from the good practice detailed in AFAG/HSE's published guidance and attendees are provided with copies of relevant leaflets during these events. SHADs also provide an opportunity to promote the work of AFAG and HSE through local media and even national television (a recent HSE forestry SHAD was featured on BBC Scotland's Landward Programme).

18 These are considered to be an effective means of communicating with both the arboriculture and forestry industries. A plan should be drawn up to further develop the content and delivery of future SHADs, by identifying the appropriate target audiences and locations/venues for future events.

#### **ACTION POINT 6**

## **B. PROMOTING AFAG & HSE THROUGH THE SPECIALIST TRADE / INDUSTRY PRESS AND NATIONAL MEDIA**

19 To ensure that AFAG (and HSE) continues to improve how it communicates and promotes its work, activities and guidance, it is proposed that an overarching communication plan should be developed in relation to the specialist trade/industry press and national media which delivers three main objectives:

- Publicising and promoting the overall aims and objectives of AFAG and HSE, with particular emphasis on AFAG's position as a forum at which the tree work industry can directly influence the development of HSE policy and the production of industry 'best practice' guidance.
- Increasing awareness of specific AFAG projects within the tree work Sector, encouraging contributions from the industry Sector to specific projects and enhancing the transparency of AFAG's work.
- Ensuring that HSE's key messages are promoted throughout all AFAG's work.

20. AFAG/HSE have had considerable success in 2006 in delivering the above objectives. For example, the AFAG/HSE Seminar at the APF Show in September generated considerable media coverage on the launch of the AFAG Training and Certification Industry Consultation Exercise, the new AFAG Steep Ground Working guidance leaflet and the findings and recommendations from the FC/HSE sponsored research into WBV in forestry.

21. To build further upon these successes and to contribute to the development of an overarching strategy, it is proposed that where appropriate, each AFAG Project Group should identify at least 3 areas where publicity in the trade or other media could be beneficial. These could include:

- An introductory article (where appropriate), giving an outline of the aims and objectives of each Project Group and encouraging industry input / participation.
- An article at the mid-stage of each project providing an update on progress and an overview of the current position of the Project Group. This would allow ideas to be floated within the industry, seek feedback and industry support.
- A final article at the end of the project to publicize and promote the outputs of the Project Group and promote any guidance published as a result.

22. To ensure the articles have maximum impact it is essential that Project Groups identify their key audiences and the most appropriate journals, trade body newsletters, etc, to reach those audiences. AFAG Project Group members should produce the articles in collaboration with the relevant member of the Ag Sector who can ensure HSE's key communication messages (as above) are appropriately reflected and can help to find the most appropriate routes for general publicity. Where possible, media other than the traditional trade press should be considered, (such as industry/company

newsletters, TV and radio (where specialist programming exists, eg BBC Countryfile (or Landward in Scotland), Regional News programmes).

#### **ACTION POINT 7**

##### **C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING HSE AND AFAG FORESTRY & ARB WEBSITE**

23. The current HSE forestry and arboriculture websites are difficult to access and they are an under-used resource as a consequence. Use of the internet is expanding and could be a powerful tool in helping to deliver AFAG Projects and communicating with the industry - as long as the website can be made much more 'user-friendly' and it is maintained and updated regularly.

24. In addition, Bomel's research has identified that the industry (at all levels) would benefit from better communication from HSE in relation to highlighting recent accidents, promoting new publications and guidance and providing better links to more specific areas of HSE's work e.g. WBV, Noise etc. The HSE website provides a reactive and dynamic way to address these issues. To achieve this, a number of aspects need to be addressed.

##### ***(i) Improving Delivery To The End User***

25. HSE and AFAG recognise the importance of improving the standard of delivery to the end-user of HSE's website. The following two proposals to develop and improve HSE's current website could be delivered with minimal resource:

- To re-launch the forestry and arboriculture websites as a single 'Tree Work' website, encompassing both forestry and arb. This would avoid the need for duplication and emphasises a common approach. The topic 'Tree work' will be included in the 'Your Industry' drop down menu on the HSE homepage, enabling it to be accessed more easily, particularly by the uninitiated.
- To use the 'Tree work' website as a user-friendly link to other areas, for example to the AFAG committee homepage and associated Project pages (all of which should also be maintained and up-to-date), and to relevant research reports, leaflets and specific links to HSE's Fit 3 topics, such as vibration and noise.

#### **ACTION POINT 8**

NB. HSE Board member approval has been sought.

##### ***(ii) Improving AFAG Project Group Delivery Through The Use of HSE's Website***

26 As Members will be aware, as part of the recent AFAG Training and Certification Project Group industry consultation exercise, HSE set up a '***Training and Certification In Tree Work Community Website***'. This was to enable anyone from the tree work sector to take part in the consultation by submitting his or her views directly and to take part in a 'discussion forum'. Despite some initial difficulties in setting this up, the site has been a success. HSE has developed a number of these websites and forums for the Fit3 Programmes and is keen to establish this method for consultation and communication across all industries.

27 Although the Training and Certification Consultation Website was fully open to the public, it is possible to set up a similar site where access can be restricted – for example to AFAG members only. A single Community Website can contain any number of individual Discussion Groups that can be targeted at different issues – for example, each AFAG Project Group could have its own discussion forum. Therefore it is proposed:

- To put in place an ‘*AFAG Community Website*’. Access to the site can be restricted to AFAG or Group members as and where appropriate.
- To set up individual discussion Groups for each AFAG Project Group to allow Group Members to put forward views and discuss issues relevant to their own specific Project Groups.
- To upload documentation relevant to AFAG Project Groups onto the site for Members to download or view (which will reduce the number of documents sent to unnecessarily to Members by e-mail).
- That Members would be registered by HSE and informed of their usernames and password.
- That Individual Project Discussion Groups can be used by Group leaders to co-ordinate the activity of the Group.

28 Once registered, those using the site are automatically contacted by e-mail as new issues arise or contributions are made to the discussion. This system would enable work on projects to continue outside meetings, would improve delivery of Project aims and objectives while reducing T&S costs and the inconvenience to Members caused by attending excessive meetings. Where appropriate, parts of these sites could be open to the public to increase participation from the industry and enhance the transparency of AFAG’s work.

#### **ACTION POINT 9**

#### ***(iii) New Ways Of Delivering AFAG & HSE Guidance Using IT***

29 The AFAG Communications Group recognise that IT-based technologies continue to advance rapidly and the Group propose that AFAG should look towards the future to develop new and innovative ways of delivering key messages, information and guidance.

30 Recent research by Bomel identified that the industry believed safety could be improved by highlighting and providing information on the causes of accidents as a way of improving risk awareness and of delivering AFAG guidance to the industry. This could be implemented easily and inexpensively in two ways:

- **Hazard Alerts** - HSE could issue ‘Hazard Alerts’, eg following the investigation of serious accidents, providing simple advice that can be downloaded or viewed from the website. An example of this is shown in Appendix 2. This is taken from the ‘Worksafe BC’ website in Canada. They use a drawing to illustrate the accident (we could use a photo) and provide a

brief description of the accident and a list of measures that could have prevented it from happening.

- **Animated Slide-Shows** - When an accident is extremely serious or highlights a significant high-risk area, eg public access or lone working, an animated slideshow could be posted, which can be downloaded or viewed from the website. This could be based on a sequence of photographs from the accident site with a narration explaining why the accident happened and what measures should have been in place to prevent it. An example of this will be shown at the meeting. These slideshow/animations could be provided by inspectors or others in the industry and can be produced from within the Ag Sector with little additional resource input, eg by using Microsoft's Power Point or Flash Media Player.

31 **The use of Videos (Podcasts) / Video-Streaming (on web/mobile phones)** - Bomel's recent research identified that many forestry contractors and operators in the industry find AFAG leaflets 'too wordy' and that the use of short videos to demonstrate the good practice detailed in the AFAG Guides should be investigated. The Forestry Commission have recently produced a short video on H&S in Forestry for those taking up apprenticeships with FE. This innovative video, which will be shown at the meeting and clearly demonstrates the potential video has for delivering key messages on H&S – particularly to the younger age groups in the tree work sector. In addition, the growing popularity of downloadable video such as 'podcasts' and video-clip web sites such as 'You Tube' demonstrates the potential impact of video streaming in delivering information and communicating key messages. Both video streaming and podcasts involve downloading and watching videos straight from a link on the Internet. This could be a potentially powerful tool for visually delivering practical safety information alongside printed AFAG guides.

32 A key element of this technology is that mobile phones with the ability to play and store small sections of video are becoming common place and an increasing number of contractors and operators are using such mobile phones to communicate with each other. Potentially, this facility would mean that safety videos could be viewed on site and used by both managers and operators as part of their risk assessments, and to demonstrate safe systems of work.

33 To investigate the use of video streaming the Group propose that a short video (5 mins) on a specific tree work safety topic should be produced. The effectiveness of the video could then be assessed and evaluated initially by AFAG members and HSE staff. If successful, this could be made available for operators/managers to download via a link on the HSE's 'Tree Work' website. As suggested above, video clips could (in the future) also be received by (and even sent directly) to mobile phones for use on site. This system could also be evaluated using Bomel's Tool (see para 35 below).

34 This initiative would support the Government's objective to utilise such technology. Other Government Departments and some Police forces have already started to investigate the use of this type of media. This is an opportunity for AFAG (and HSE) to be at the cutting edge. This would be subject to HSE or industry

sponsorship but the industry have already indicated willingness to fund and assist in a pilot of this type of initiative. It is proposed that this should be developed and trialled as soon as possible.

#### **ACTION POINT 10**

### **EVALUATION**

35 The effectiveness of the above proposals could be evaluated using a variety of robust methods:

- AFAG and HSE's effectiveness at communicating through the media could be evaluated using HSE's existing 'Echo' reports. These provide information on both the level of media coverage (local/trade and national) and the favourability/efficacy of the media coverage.
- Usage of web-based material would be assessed by record the number of 'hits' or downloads from the HSE/AFAG websites.
- AFAG's Members would provide direct feedback from the industry on the initial reception and interest in these measures.
- True evaluation of the impact of these approaches could be provided by applying Bomel's 'Barometer of Cultural Change', which enables evaluation of the impact of specific initiatives (or the overall communication strategy) in changing behaviour over time.

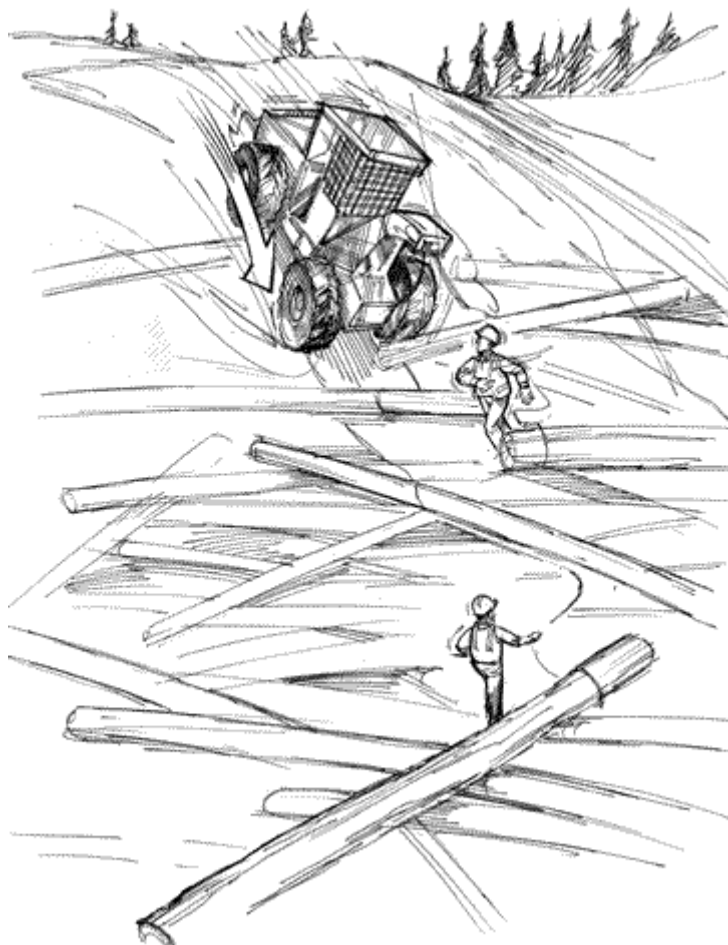
# HAZARD ALERT

**Industry:** Logging    **Age:** 51 years    **Experience:** 12 years (supervisor)    **Area:** Okanagan

## Runaway skidder kills supervisor

A supervisor setting chokers below a forwarding trail was fatally injured when a parked skidder unexpectedly rolled down the slope and ran over him.

A rubber-tired skidder was being used to skid logs from below the forwarding skid trail at a cable yarding site. The operator backed the skidder up near the outer edge of the trail, placed the transmission in neutral, lowered the blade to the ground, and placed the winch control lever in free spool. He thought he had applied the parking brake. The supervisor went down the slope and started to set the chokers. The skidder operator then left the skidder to help set the remaining chokers. A few minutes after the skidder had been parked, it unexpectedly rolled backwards off the trail and down the slope, striking and rolling over the supervisor. He suffered fatal crushing injuries to his head and body.



Safe work practices:

Employers must establish written safe work procedures for skidding on adverse (uphill) conditions.

Skidder operators must be trained to safely:

Skid trees in adverse (uphill) conditions

Park and position a skidder so that if it moves unexpectedly, it does not create hazards for workers setting chokers (especially those working below the skidder on the downhill side of the slope)

Before leaving a parked skidding machine, operators must ensure that the transmission is out of gear, the blade is lowered firmly to the ground, and the parking brake is in the "on" position.

If operations require a skidder to be backed up near the edge of a trail to reach logs or trees, the skidder operator should remain on the skidder and a second worker should set the chokers.

## **FATALITY**

**01-11**



The WCB has a wide range of health and safety information. For copies of this poster or other health and safety related literature and videos contact: WCB Publications and Videos Section by calling 604-276-3068 or toll-free within BC 1-800-661-2112, or email your request to [pubvid@wcb.bc.ca](mailto:pubvid@wcb.bc.ca). For assistance and information on workplace health and safety, call toll-free within BC 1-888-621-SAFE (7233) or visit our web site at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com).

