

Safety and Community Forests

Safety Considerations for Volunteers, Visitors, and
Recreation on Community Forest Tenures



RESPONSIBILITY	OWNER	PRIME CONTRACTOR	EMPLOYER	SUPERVISOR	WORKER	DIRECTORS/OFFICERS
Provide and maintain land and premises in safe manner	●					
Identify and communicate known & foreseeable hazards on worksite	●	●	●	●	●	
Ensure a safe, practical plan is in place to address hazards	●	●	●	●		
Ensure work is done according to the plan, safe work procedures and regulations	●	●	●	●	●	●
Educate workers on safe work procedures; ensure they know and follow them			●	●		
Coordinate the safety activities of all employers, contractors, workers and anyone else at the workplace	●	●				
Compile safety information; share it with designated supervisors and workers		●	●	●		
Participate in meetings to discuss work plan and resolve safety issues (e.g., pre-work, tailgate meetings)	●	●	●	●	●	
Participate in follow up communications and actions		●	●	●	●	
Ensure Occupational Health and Safety program and policies are in place			●			●
Establish and implement Emergency Response Procedures		●	●	●		
Ensure Personal Protective Equipment is available and used as required			●	●	●	
Consult and cooperate with WSBC and others to prevent / address safety concerns	●	●	●	●	●	●

Safety for volunteers and visitors

- Volunteer and outreach events can occur on and off community forest tenures
- For events on CFA tenures, CFs are accountable as the site owner and potentially also hold other roles, such as supervisor
- Consider ways to reduce risk and practice due diligence - before there is a close call or incident
 - Waivers for volunteer work
 - Volunteer orientation package, outlining safety plan and hazards
 - Tailgate safety talk before outreach events
 - PPE – provided by CF?
 - Pre-trip site safety visit (hazard identification and abatement)
- NACFOR supports community projects by allowing non-profits to utilize the storage yard (trails society, community services projects)
- NACFOR does field trips for schools and community groups, on and off the community forest



Safety for recreation on community forests

- Community forests often overlap recreation areas, high-traffic areas, and create/support recreational opportunities
 - Authorized and unauthorized trails, hunting, ATVs, skiing, firewood, hiking, biking...
- As tenure holders, CFs are considered the “owner” and are responsible for maintaining a safe environment for public land use
- Consider all possible safety risks and mitigation options to practice due diligence:
 - Active community engagement to provide information about conditions and closures (Facebook, Trails/Rec societies, community info centres, tourism maps)
 - Trail and road maintenance
 - Signage to notify users of the risks at all reasonable access points
 - Access control to limit risk in hazardous areas: fencing, gates, signage
- Unauthorized trails on CF tenure are potentially hazardous, unmaintained/unrecorded, may be known about or unknown
 - Tenure holders are still liable and are obligated to manage them for public safety
 - Confusing for the public (crisscrossing trails, signage)
 - Exhaust all steps to show your due diligence to limit risk
 - Consider taking ownership and responsibility for maintenance? Transfer of liability



What can you do?

If you are a director, officer, or member of the board of an organization that employs people who work on a community forest licence area, here are a few key questions you must ask:

1. Does our organization have the necessary health and safety program in place?
2. Does that program include effective policies and safe work procedures?
3. Do we have effective safety communications with staff?
4. Do we regularly review our organization's safety management system?
5. Do we have a continual improvement process in place?
6. If we have a safety incident, is it reported, investigated and reviewed? Do we follow through with appropriate corrective actions?
7. Do directors and officers have enough time and resources to execute their safety responsibilities?

