

LRD Contracting



Cutting down risks to young workers

When it comes to falling trees in remote regions, people should never be stumped. That's why training young workers to be safe and effective fallers is a priority at LRD Contracting and associated company JGT Falling. The Squamish based companies understand that proper training benefits the industry as well as the individual.

"We have a shortage of young workers in our industry," says President, Manager Terry Vaugeois. "We all need to step up to the plate."

For employers, that means starting their young employees with the BC Forest Safety Council's faller certification program – also known as the BC Faller Training Standard. The initial phase of training is 30 days: five days in the classroom and 25 days of field training with an instructor. The program is run exclusively by the BC Forest Safety Council – a not-for-profit society that is supported by WorkSafeBC and the provincial government – and ensures that all new fallers are safely and consistently trained.

After the 30 day training and upon arriving at the worksite, young workers are usually enthusiastic and anxious to begin falling trees. The company however, tempers eagerness by reminding young workers of their on-going training.

With a company supervisor, young workers receive a comprehensive orientation that includes:

- Job safety program overview
- Pre-work hazard assessments
- Helicopter safety

For the next three months, the supervisor works closely with young workers. Acting as mentor, the supervisor will document a daily evaluation and also teach young workers to recognize unsafe conditions that would otherwise be overlooked by an inexperienced eye.

Only once young workers have proven themselves consistently skilled at safely falling trees does their supervisor give them more independence.

At this point, the supervisor visits each young worker every couple of days. To provide on-going support and evaluate safe work practices, the visits are more frequent than the required weekly check-up.

For each evaluation, a checklist is used to ensure proper documentation and consistency for each visit.

One hundred and eighty days after the BC Forest Safety Council's initial training, young workers are eligible to apply for their faller certification. But being eligible doesn't mean that they automatically qualify.

Before the application is submitted, LRD Contracting must agree that the young worker has demonstrated sufficient skill and safety awareness to be a certified faller. Also, the young worker must feel confident and comfortable to take the next step in their career. The examination, administered by the BC Forest Safety Council, is the final test for young workers who want to become certified fallers in the province.

In a high-risk and competitive industry such as tree falling, LRD Contracting takes young worker safety seriously. For the company, investing in the safety of young workers is not only good for each person, it's good for business too.