



# WESTERN FALLERS ASSOCIATION

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March 31, 2006

Attention: Henry Sundberg, Les Veale, Mike Nielsen, Bruce Fleenor

**Re: Fallers working in isolated conditions with lack of qualified assistance readily available should a mishap take place injuring the worker.**

Referring directly back to the BC Falling Training Standard which has been endorsed by Worksafe BC as well as entire Forest Harvesting Sector of BC the rules regarding this problem are quite clear to us.

I'll start this memo to you by referring back to the Worksafe Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Part 26 under the Falling and Bucking heading. Summoning assistance, **Regulation 26.28 (1) Qualified assistance must be readily available to Fallers in case of difficulty, emergency or injury.**

**Qualified assistance** will be an (unrestricted) Certified Faller not a Woods Foreman, Faller Trainee, 'baby-sitter' or First Aid Attendant.

**'Readily available'** as laid out in the 'Standard' is **10 minutes!**

There is another regulation, **26.23** that states, **The employer must ensure that Fallers and Buckers follow written work procedures that include safe work practices for (a) minimum and maximum distances between fallers and other workers,**

Having brought this to everyone's attention, is the situation that Cattermole Timber trying to send Mr. Sundberg into within the limits as stated?

From dialogue that I have had with Henry, I believe the Company to be willing to fulfill its duty towards section **26.28 (2) Fallers and Buckers must have an effective means to summon assistance,** but not to 26.28 (1). In the event of a situation can the Woods Foreman summon a Qualified Faller to get out of his quarter, walk and or drive and get to Henry within 10 minutes should he need to be bucked out from under a tree which is suffocating him? **If this can not be done, get a qualified, certified Faller complete with spare falling tools to 'baby-sit' Henry until this particular job is completed.**

Two systems failures that have recently taken place with regards to the very situation that Mr. Sundberg is being asked to put himself in. They are as follows:

**Faller Fatal, Adams Lk. area.** A Faller was working on a RoW job on a Saturday with his wife 'baby-sitting' him. They were doing radio checks but no one else was working that day. This Faller

was hit by a snag, there was no assistance anywhere. What were these folks thinking? He did not have a chance in the event of an emergency!

**Faller Fatal, Nanaimo area.** Ted Gramlich, smashed by an overhead hazard. Radio checks were being done with a falling partner 35 minutes away. Lack of qualified assistance readily available along with a host of other things which were very wrong caused 'Turbo' Ted to die unnecessarily.

Does Cattermole Timber want its name to be added to this list of repulsive situations that these Fallers were put in? I truly wish our Forest Industry would stop gambling with Fallers lives like they are nothing more than poker chips!

As always, I'm available for further consultation. I can be reached at (250) 638-8729, put me on a speaker phone for your meeting if you like. I do hope the safe decision is made by the Company with regards to Henry. Quite frankly, I'm going to be mad if anything other than the resolution (paragraph 7) I have suggested is implemented.

Respectfully yours,

Michael McKibbin, Chairman  
Western Fallers Association

cc Bill Bolton, Manager, BC Fallers' Certification Program  
Roberta Ellis, VP, Investigations, Policy and Research, Worksafe BC  
Dianna Miles, VP, Human Resource and Prevention, Worksafe BC  
Tanner Elton, CEO, BC Forest Safety Council  
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