

August 20, 2001

David Young, Policy Director  
Policy and Regulation Development Bureau  
Workers Compensation Board  
P.O. Box 5350 Stn. Terminal  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6B 5L8

Dear Mr. David Young,

Re: A written response discussing the preferred option pertaining to the manual falling and bucking rates.

I have read over all the options presented to us in your fax of August 8 and would like to respond in full support of option 3B. This one deals directly with the problem created for the independent fallers which is an uneven playing field between us and integrated fallers and an unnecessary financial burden put on our shoulders. Option 3B addresses these issues.

I have taken a moment to discuss the other options listed in your fax. What I have said rings true through the eyes of the independents. Under no circumstances is this correspondence intended to spark off a debate between ourselves, W.C.B. or any of the other stakeholders.

Option #1: The independents don't really have much to say about this one. Obviously, things have to change. There has been enough evidence supplied and enough talking gone on so that all the stakeholders involved should realise that this one is not a option. To keep independent fallers' rates at 18.18% and integrated fallers at 6.45% per one hundred dollars of payroll is an act of prejudice against the independents.

Option #2: We feel that this is not a feasible option either. All stakeholders have agreed there is a money problem for the independents that has already been going on for a year and a half. Stretching this out for another year only adds insult to injury.

Option #3A: Through our eyes, this one looks like one big headache for integrated companies using fallers. Although this option addresses the issue of the "uneven playing field", we feel that it will also create other problems for W.C.B. and the independents in C.U. 703013.

Option #3B: This option addresses the financial burdens imposed on the independents.

Option #4A: This one is definitely not an option to consider and I will take a moment to explain why not. Although you may call yourself a mechanical logger, there are not too many instances that you don't keep a manual faller or two around for these jobs. These fallers will be doing the steep parts or the gullies, snagging out boundaries, falling oversize trees, thick, heavy blowdown patches, etc. In many cases, these mechanical fallers have opened their patches right into the timber left for the manual faller, creating quite a hazardous mess. Another favourite stunt we have witnessed is bunchers that hack into an oversize tree and when realising that he can't do anything with it he then leaves that tree cup up and standing. This can become real interesting for the faller after the base of that tree has been covered by a foot of fresh snow overnight and no one managed to let the faller know it was there. Things like this are going on all the time. Why should the independent fallers be subsidising such shoddiness.


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There is one other aspect that has become known to us over the course of the last month, which is more of a loss to W.C.B. than it is to us. That is the amount of independents through the Interior that are registered with W.C.B. under cover of a lower rate paying C.U. We have talked with nine separate fallers that have admitted doing this and we are sure there are others doing the same. Out of those nine fallers, only one was displeased with what we would like to see happen, which is one rate for logging. The other eight all agreed that if W.C.B. instates one industry, one rate, not only would it be impossible to cloak them selves but it would also be unnecessary because the field would then be even.

Option #4B: This one has the same effect as option 3B with a tracking device attached for use by W.C.B.'s Prevention Division. Provided it was never used against the independent fallers, we do not see a problem with condoning this option. The independents would like to see their jobs become a little safer, and this has to start somewhere. One consideration the Board might like to try is tracking the outfits that use independent fallers, i.e.: Is one outfit's fallers being hurt more than the prime contractor across the street?

Option #5: This is a touchy one. While C.O.F.I. did mainly come up with this one, stating that, "We've got the independents talking now, let's freeze this thing and talk". There have been a number of correspondences go directly to Ian May as well as c.c.s to him from correspondence to W.C.B., in an effort to include C.O.F.I. in what the independents are up against. We have not received any return correspondence back from him. The only way we can go with option #5 would be to have full, immediate instatement of option #4B along with it.

Sincerely,



Michael McKibbin  
Independent Faller

c.c. Randall Shoop  
Gerry Paquette