

**Western Fallers Association (W.F.A.)**  
**250-638-8729 - Box 165 Telkwa, B.C. V0J 2X0 - 250-846-9552**

Bill Housden-Aaron Frye-Jordan Nicolussi-Bob Wells-Dominic Gagnon-Mack Schat-Barry Hawes-Randy Shoop-Bill Boardman-Everett Maxwell-Bruce Fleenor-Mike McKibbin-Ray Therrien-Tim DeGagne

Mike Mckibbin  
2301 Cramer St.  
Terrace, B.C  
Phone (250)638-8729  
e-mail [dmckibbin@monarch.net](mailto:dmckibbin@monarch.net)

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Lee Doney, Deputy Minister of Labour  
2nd Floor  
634 Humbolt St.  
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Mr. Doney,

**Re: The certifying of existing fallers (grandfathering) in B.C. and what it is going to take to properly implement a project of this magnitude.**

As we hope you are aware, the W.C.B has developed a new Training Standard to become a faller in the province of B.C. In order to make sure the existing fallers are up to speed with the new 'standard', they will have to be 'grandfathered' in. The Western Fallers Association (W.F.A.) has been involved in both the roll out for the 'Standard' and the pilot for the 'Grandfathering'. The W.F.A. directors that were involved in these sessions all gave it the thumbs up. We agreed that there has not been anything put together like it to date, that it is fair and thorough. It took the 'Boards' working group, along with many others, countless hours and a lot of money to develop this program. As the 'Standard' came into its final stages of development in the fall of 2002, there was a group struck up out of forest industry representatives who were to call themselves the Faller Advisory Committee for Training and Certification (F.A.C.T.A.C.). The W.F.A. kept two of it's directors on this committee. This group was to aid the 'Board' in getting the program out to the fallers in an orderly fashion that would be acceptable to all.

F.A.C.T.A.C settled down to putting together what was requested of them. What they initially came up with we'll call phase one because with the months that followed and the hurdles that arose there were other options that had to be explored. **In short, phase one was the only route to take due to the size of this project along with other problems that were identified when fallers certification was attempted in the early '90's.**

Phase one was to entail having the Forest Industry Safety Association (F.I.S.A.) handle all administrative duties. They have the properly trained personnel and the interest to take on this function. In order for this to 'fly', orderly records and a home base for all correspondence to accumulate is mandatory. The evaluators, as we came to call them, were to come right out of the falling community. There were to be about two dozen of these men who were going to look after putting the existing fallers through the 'grandfathering' as well as become qualified trainers for new fallers breaking in to the industry. Another very important role they would play right away is to assist fallers who failed the 'Standard', brush up their skills, so they could retake the evaluation and carry on with the career they have chosen. The evaluators would be selected from criteria that had been drafted up by F.A.C.T.A.C. As with everything else to date, it was thorough. They would be chosen first by a resume and an interview by a sub committee that came out of exiting F.A.C.T.A.C. members. From there they would be passed on the W.C.B.'s working group to go through the 'grandfathering' process themselves, to make sure they could pass what they were going out to put other fallers through. After that they would go on to a two week train the trainer session. These fallers were going to be qualified to do what was being asked of them, there by adding 'teeth' to the whole program. They, in turn would work in conjunction with F.I.S.A. Along with this, there was also a budget put together as this was going to cost some money.

It was decided by F.A.C.T.A.C., that in order to obtain sufficient funding to carry out all the above mentioned, about two

million dollars was needed. This was to come from a .02 add on to everyone involved in the forest sectors W.C.B. assessment rates over a two year period. It covered everybody, from the single Independent Faller clear through to the Licensees. **By distributing the bill for this undertaking it showed that there was commitment from all facets of the forest industry, not to mention the other problems it would alleviate. This was, in fact a safety program, and a big one at that.**

During the time all the preparation for the 'Grandfathering Project' was being made the licensees in the province were going through a restructuring period. F.A.C.T.A.C. was having trouble getting proper representation from the already existing Council of Forest Industries (C.O.F.I.). Out of the restructuring period for the licensees rose two groups in the province. C.O.F.I. was to represent the interior pulp and lumber manufacturers and a new group, the Coast Forest Lumber Association (C.F.L.A.) was to represent the coast. When the Prevention Division of W.C.B. could finally approach these groups in an orderly fashion to make sure they felt alright about buying in to this project, it took the new C.O.F.I. bunch all of a week to come back with a reply of no. It didn't take the coastal group to long to pull their financial support out also, sending the whole project into somewhat of a tailspin. This was not right because it started to undermine the validity of the whole thing, whether they like to think it or not. We have heard reasons why they pulled out, but quite frankly none of them are very substantial.

There has been movement by the Prevention Division of W.C.B. to keep the ball rolling on the 'Grandfathering Project', there had to be. There was too much time, effort and money invested into this project to have it shelved. The W.F.A. appreciates the bind that Roberta Ellis and her people have been put into by the licensees and applaud them for carrying on, but let's face it, those officers are taxed enough with the duties they have been hired to perform without having to carry out the 'grandfathering' as well.

**In order to obtain a successful closing date for the 'Grandfathering Project' and to have enough qualified trainers for the breaking in of new fallers in the province of British Columbia, the Western Fallers Association recommends that the Provincial Government goes to the licensees and legislates the money from them to carry on with phase one as mentioned in this memo.** It's a shame that things should have to come to this. As we stated earlier, this is a safety program, designed to help bring the accidents and deaths to fallers down. Somewhere along the line it is going to have to be realized, that in order to bring the accidents down, it is going to take involvement from the entire sector. In the case of the fallers 'grandfathering' project, it's going to take financial involvement. The product is there and it is good. There are people further removed from the falling community than the licensees that are willing to ante up to see this project work. For all the people involved to date on the fallers 'grandfathering', we hope the right decision will be made to get things back on track. Anyone wishing further consultation on this matter from an Independent Fallers point of view and who already went through a certification process once before can contact me.

Respectfully yours,

Michael McKibbin, Chairman  
Western Fallers Association

Cc W.F.A. Directors  
Doug Enns, Chairman, Forest Safety Task Force  
Roberta Ellis, Vice President, W.C.B. Prevention Division  
Jim Chorney, General Manager, F.I.S.A.  
Carman Rocco, Vice President, I.W.A. Cowichan  
Ray Bozzer, Director, Employer Advisors  
Wayne Lintot, General Manager, I.L.A.  
Alison Mackenzie, Truck Loggers Association  
Tanner Elton, Facilitator, Forest Task Force