

JOINT INDUSTRY COMMUNIQUÉ ON MILL SAFETY

As British Columbia's foremost wood products manufacturers, our companies are fully committed to the Health and Safety of our employees as our number one priority.

We have come together today to share information and develop an industry-wide response to mill safety following the devastating explosions at Babine Forest Products and Lakeland Mills.

Until WorkSafe BC concludes their investigations into these incidents, none of us can say with certainty what caused the explosions at Babine and Lakeland. It is not known if the causes of the two events are connected in any way.

Today, as an industry, we have committed to establishing a formal Task Force to investigate combustion risks in mills, comprised of wood products manufacturing company representatives and external scientists, insurance engineers and experts, and other stakeholders. The Task Force will be mandated to:

- Quantify combustion risks related to dust from both green and dry wood;
- Identify best practices for dust mitigation from other industries that have issues related to dust in manufacturing;
- Develop an industry-wide, auditable standard that can be utilized to provide independent assurance of mill safety;
- Undertake outreach to all wood products manufacturing companies in BC to create an industry-wide approach to safety that is inclusive of both large and small operators.

This Task Force will report to a CEO Action Committee.

Collectively, we commit to communicating regularly with our employees and other stakeholders to provide updates on progress and actions to enhance safety in our mills.

Management and employees will work together to continue to be vigilant in identifying potential hazards and to put safety first and demonstrate the mutual importance we place on comprehensively addressing all employee safety concerns.

We will solicit the support and collaboration of all levels of government and their agencies.

We encourage and appreciate the involvement and contributions of employee groups and union leadership toward enhancing sawmill safety.



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“This is a significant collaborative effort to ensure that BC’s wood products manufacturers are operating to the absolute highest standards,” said West Fraser CEO Hank Ketcham. “We look forward to working with our industry colleagues to advance these important initiatives.”

“We will continue to be transparent with our employees, with government and with each other if we identify new combustion hazards or means of improving safety procedures,” said Canfor CEO Don Kayne. “We have taken every opportunity to increase our efforts in safety since the serious incidents at Lakeland and Babine and this joint initiative is a next and very important step.”

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