

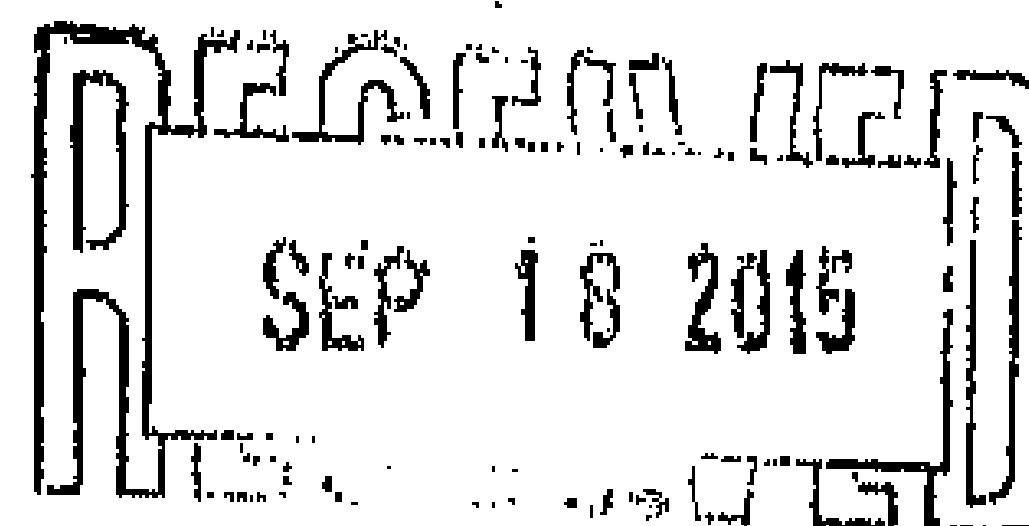


Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Mailing address: PO Box 2310 Stn Terminal, Vancouver BC V6B 3W5
Phone 604.279.8171 | 1.866.266.9405 | Fax 604.279.7401 | worksafebc.com

September 11, 2015.

[REDACTED]
United Steelworkers
300-3920 Norland Ave
Burnaby, BC V5G 4K7



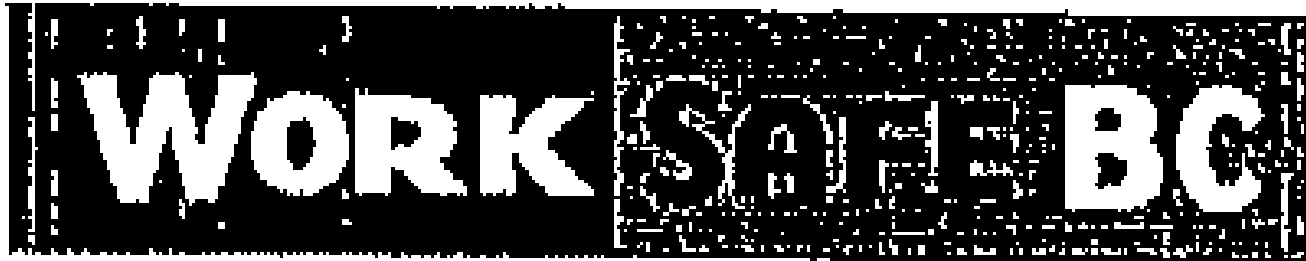
Re: Freedom of Information Request - WCB-15-620

I am writing in response to your request for access to information under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Act). You requested any and all communications, drafts, briefing notes, and reports regarding fire and explosion hazards in wood processing facilities, including but not limited to any drafts or final versions entitled "Potential Fire and Explosive -- Explosion Hazard" document prepared or circulated between January 1, 2012 - June 1, 2012.

In response to your request I sent you a copy of two records in my letter dated August 12, 2015. One of the records was entitled "*Wood Dust in Sawmills - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards*" and the other was entitled "*Wood Dust in Wood Product Manufacturing Facilities - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards*".

On September 10, 2015 you informed me that the record you received entitled "*Wood Dust in Wood Product Manufacturing Facilities - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards*" was different from the version presented at the Coroner's Inquest. In response to this I contacted Mr. Barry Nakahara, the individual who drafted the record. Mr. Nakahara informed me that the aforementioned record sent to you in my August 12, 2015 letter was the earlier version of the record presented at the Inquest. Please find enclosed the final draft of the record entitled "*Wood Dust in Wood Product Manufacturing Facilities - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards*". This record is being disclosed to you in full.

Please note that I questioned Mr. Nakahara on whether there were any other drafts of the record entitled "*Wood Dust in Wood Product Manufacturing Facilities - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards*" and the record entitled "*Wood Dust in Sawmills - Potent Fire and Explosion Hazard*". Mr. Nakahara informed me that there are no other versions of these respective records that have not been disclosed to you.



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If you disagree with our response, you have 30 days from receipt of this letter to request a review by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia (OIPC). You can contact the OIPC at 250-387-5629, or visit their website at www.oipc.bc.ca.

If you have any questions about this response, please write or call me at 604-279-8171.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aisha Ligali", written over a horizontal line.

Aisha Ligali
Freedom of Information Officer

Encls.

j:\WCB-15-620resp2full

Wood Dust in Wood Product Manufacturing Facilities – Potent Fire and Explosion Hazards

Issue:

An explosion and fire recently destroyed the Babine Sawmill in Burns Lake. The incident resulted in 2 fatalities and several seriously injuries. Although the cause of the explosion and fire has not been accurately determined, wood dust is being considered as a potential factor in the explosion. We have also seen several wood dust related fires in sawmills over the years and within this region we have seen at least 2 explosions in other wood product production plants over the past few years.

Based these recent incidents there appears to be a need to assess the understanding of this issue within our organization it would be a timely opportunity to raise officer awareness around this issue and to bring attention to this hazard across the industry.

Potential Impacts:

The issue spans a broad range of industries: Wood products, Agriculture, Metal and mineral processing, Food and beverage and transportation to name a few.

Industry sensitivity to the issue given the recent event and limited clarity around what constitutes an explosion has could lead to push back if an enforcement strategy is pursued at this time.

Related information:

1. There is belief that dust in sawmills has become finer, drier and more abundant over past 10+ years. This is related to the fact the many mills are processing beetle kill (drier) wood, they have increased production speeds and running a finer kerf, (width of cut).
2. OH&S 5.81 (if combustible dust collects in a building or structure or on machinery or equipment, it must be safely removed before accumulation of the dust could cause a fire or explosion), is essentially a performance based and has no current guideline. This regulation would apply to dust accumulations general work areas.
3. OH&S 5.71 specifies requirements for exhaust ventilation systems for combustible or flammable contaminants. The associated guideline G5.71 references a series of NFPA standards on combustible and explosive dusts.
4. A small group of officers were brought together within the region to discuss the issue and the follow were identified:
 - NFPA standard be helpful in assessing factors relating to explosive risk – particle size, dispersion, ignition sources, composition, and moisture content.

- Given the technical nature and limited clarity, there is need for more guidance and training on this issue.
 - A list of considerations was developed as a starting point for assessing potentially hazardous dust accumulations in general work areas.
5. This issue has been brought to the provincial high risk team for forestry to address and a small working group has been established, (Mark Peebles, Barry Nakahara, Geoff Clarke).

Recommendations

Interior North Regional managers are proposing to introduce a regional initiative to gather information from sawmills during normal inspections throughout the year. The focus being on how are they currently assessing and controlling the risk of dust related fire and explosion. This information could be useful in helping the above mentioned provincial group in their work.

Manager of Interest:

Barry Nakahara