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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

December 14, 2005

### **BC CORONER SERVICE REVIEWING ALL FOREST WORKER FATALITIES**

VANCOUVER - The BC Coroners Service is responding to rising concerns about the number of forest worker fatalities in B.C. this year by taking steps to make certain one or more deaths will be taken to Public Inquest.

Every sudden or unexpected death in B.C. is investigated by the Coroners Service. In the specific case of forest worker fatalities, the Coroner will determine if there are common or similar circumstances involved, and may order a Public Inquest if deemed appropriate.

An inquest reviews the circumstances of an individual death, and evidence relative to that death is then provided to a jury. To ensure that the evidence presented at these inquests permits a broad review of issues concerning safety and injury prevention in the forest industry, the decision concerning which deaths will be reviewed at Inquest must be carefully made.

Included in this decision will be a review of where the deaths are occurring and whether they take place more often in a particular sector of the industry.

The decision to conclude a death investigation by way of Inquest or Coroner's Inquiry is a sensitive one that takes into account the best interests of the deceased, their family and the Coroners Service mandate. Recommendations from the Inquest may address systemic issues and prevent deaths in the future.

Deaths that do not go to Inquest will still be subject to thorough Inquiries, in which the Coroner also has the ability to make recommendations.

In addition to these processes, the Coroners Service would like to engage stake-holders, unions and industry in a multidisciplinary review of safety issues in order to facilitate strategies to prevent loss of life in the forest industry.

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