

Further information

The five projects above will be profiled at the Forest Safety Summit in March 2017. In the meantime, FISC will continue to provide safety and performance information to the sector through safetree.nz. Those who go to the website and sign up for our newsletters get regular emails with the latest resources and information. I would encourage everyone who works in forestry to do this.

This information includes easy-to-understand guides on how the Health and Safety at Work Act applies to forestry, along with templates, posters, videos and booklets that can be used for planning, inductions, safety workshops and tailgate meetings.

Importantly, the site also includes a dashboard that summarises our current performance on health and safety. The latest dashboard reflects the gains in safety performance made since 2013. But it also shows a rise in injuries in the latter part of 2016 – an unwelcome trend. Reversing that trend for 2017 is an achievable goal – the forestry sector has shown before that we can improve our performance when we focus on health and safety. It is also essential if we want to build a sustainable and productive forestry industry – one we're happy for our kids to work in.

Fiona Ewing is National Safety Director of FISC based in Wellington. Email: fiona.ewing@fisc.org.nz.

Letter to the editor

Quality assurance plots

Wink Sutton

The paper in the *NZ Journal of Forestry*, 61(1): 39–40 by Robin Trewin on 'Forest establishment quality assurance' plots understates their importance and usefulness. These plots should be established close behind planting gangs by an independent, experienced forester so that bad planters can immediately be identified and recalled for a re-plant (re-work). If the planting stock is not to specification (roots trimmed too short or long, stripped of soil and mycorrhizas or stem diameters too small) the supplying nursery is at fault. Then the forest owner should not have to pay for the poor planting stock that are incorrectly planted (planting site not cleared, trees planted too shallow or simply stuffed in the ground, or not planted using the positive pull up method ensuring that all roots are downward facing, or bad handling i.e. being crushed in planting box). In this case, the contractor's supervisor is at fault and must have errant workers replant properly.

After planting, the young tree will sometimes develop a lean (topple) in gale force winds, especially when wind is accompanied by soil and root loosening

heavy rains. However, if correctly planted with roots orientated down, good deep penetrating roots soon develop to anchor stems firmly so that leaning trees quickly recover and grow straight. Further, if tree stocks are of a good quality (as well as carefully harvested, packaged, transported, stored on the planting site and planted) then growth problems, including toppling damage, are less likely.

Correctly planted trees can greatly avoid future growth and stand stability problems. Why don't all involved (the nursery, the planters and the forest owner) insist on quality assurance plots being established by reputable foresters? If this is done potential future problems can be immediately identified and corrected, ensuring good growth and final crop quality. Since those responsible for any establishment deficiencies can be identified, why don't liability insurance companies offer a reduction in premiums of 10% to 20% if quality assurance plots are established? The insurance companies as well as the forest owner could benefit greatly.