

Chapter 09 - “Behaviours & Attitudes”

In this chapter, we'll talk about ways to behave respectfully and responsibly. This includes respect for the environment. It also includes responsible, safe, and respectful behaviour towards others.

Maintaining the Health of the Ecosystem

Make sure no garbage ever gets left behind on a block. This includes lunch wrappings, drink bottles, seedling boxes, bundle wrappers, and other garbage. If I find a piece of garbage out on the block, and it's small enough to fit into my bags and not too heavy, I'll even bring it back to the garbage box at my cache at the end of my bag-up, so it ends up in a proper landfill. Never bury trash, as it can attract and sometimes harm wildlife. Never leave food in your tent, because nobody wants bears in camp. Break down tree boxes as you finish with them.



Figure 9.01
Keep the Environment Clean.

If you find something in your piece that's easy to throw into your back bag, and take it back to the garbage box at your cache (for example, discarded oil containers), it can't hurt, right? I like to think that a bit of cleanup work gives us good karma points.

Take care to avoid allowing any oil or fuel to leak onto the ground. The hydrocarbons that make up oils and fuels are highly toxic and hazardous to the environment and to the ecosystem. Spill reporting is a big part of being environmentally responsible, and the first step in ensuring that a spill can be cleaned up properly. Report any leaks or spills to your supervisor. Every contractor will carry a spill kit in their truck for use in the event of a small leak or spill.

Fires are easily started with careless behaviour. Never drop a burning cigarette on the ground, or throw it out a vehicle window. Always smoke on bare, hard-packed roads. Exercise restraint with the size of fires in camp. Be aware that truck and ATV tailpipes get very hot and can start fires in dry grass.

Lithium batteries are quite dangerous due to the possibility that they can spontaneously explode or catch fire. They've caused hundreds of structural fires in the past few years, and some unfortunate fatalities. Unfortunately, these batteries are fairly common in planting camps. For example, JBL Bluetooth speakers and the Ultimate Ears EpicBoom speaker both use lithium-ion batteries. Treat anything containing lithium batteries with a lot of caution. Don't leave them in places that could get hot, such as sitting on the ground in direct sunlight on a hot day, or on the dash of a truck. You might have to suddenly deal with an unexpected fire.



Figure 9.02

Be Fire-Safe and Fire-Smart.

Wildfires cause billions of dollars of damage across Canada every year. Be careful with campfires and cigarette butts.



Figure 9.03

Watch Where You're Smoking.

Smoking on a bare, hard-packed road significantly reduces the risk of wildfires. I can think of a dozen instances at multiple companies where planters accidentally set wildfires on blocks because they were smoking carelessly.

Don't intentionally leave garbage on the block. That includes bundle wrappers and pieces of cardboard. It may seem inconsequential to drop a few bundle wrappers on a block, considering that we're already leaving hundreds of thousands of pieces of plastic intentionally (our flagging tape). However, the bundle wrappers should be considered to be "unnecessary" plastic, and they usually piss off foresters who find them. Put them into garbage boxes at the caches, so the crew leaders can dispose of them properly in landfills. It's very likely that within five years, the industry will be essentially restricted to using corn-based or biodegradable flagging tape. The main obstacle to that right now is the cost of biodegradable flagger compared to plastic, but better suppliers will be found, costs will come down, and the industry will change (either voluntarily or because foresters start writing it into the planting contracts). Some contracts, especially in the central Cariboo-Chilcotin area of BC, have already banned the practice of dropping plastic flagger while planting. The ban on use of plastic flagger seems to be expanding each year. The issue has also become more contentious since 2023 as the utilization of single-use plastic started to come under increased pressure. Six types of

single-use plastic were banned across Canada in late 2022 (straws, six-pack rings, stir sticks, some types of foodware, plastic cutlery, and plastic grocery bags). Canada expects to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030. We need alternatives. We need some sort of affordable biodegradable flagging product.

Flagger is not the only single-use plastic that is a problem in our industry (although it's the worst). We also need to look at eliminating plastic bag liners from spring tree boxes, and we need to figure out how to eliminate bundle wrappers. And we need to figure this out quickly.

Corn starch flagger has been around for a few years now, although it's very expensive. There's also a new company called Hawk Planting Works which has developed a good paper-based biodegradable product. Learn more at: www.hawkplantingworks.com

Help your crew leader out, and keep your caches clean. This means throwing plastics into a garbage box, instead of leaving them on the ground, and leaving your flat boxes in a relatively coherent pile.



Figure 9.04
Use a Garbage Box.

The "garbage box" is used to collect any discarded plastic, flagger roll cores, bundle wrappers, lunch wrapping scraps, and any other type of litter that shouldn't be left on the block.



Figure 9.05
Pile of Flattened Boxes.

It only takes a few seconds to flatten your empty boxes and throw them into a stack. And everybody likes an excuse to spend an extra fifteen seconds at the cache, right?

Responsible, Safe, & Respectful Behaviour Toward Others

When you're part of a planting crew, you're going to be working and living with the same people, in close quarters, for a long time. You often need to co-exist in stressful or uncomfortable

circumstances, and your attitude can make the difference between a strong and productive season or a dysfunctional one.



Figure 9.06
Work As A Team.

You'll develop some lifelong friendships while you're planting.

Report bullying or harassment. Don't accept or support any bullying or harassment. If you witness any, let your supervisor know.

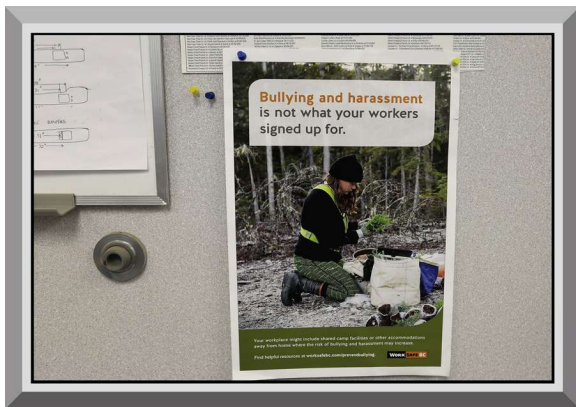


Figure 9.07
Bullying & Harassment are Unacceptable.

If bullying and/or harassment are tolerated or ignored at your company, that's the number one sign that you should find a different company to work for. If you don't like someone because they're acting like an idiot, I get it. But don't harass them. Just ignore them.

Practice positive social behaviour. Be considerate, let others have their space, smile and be friendly, and help out whenever you can.

Mentor new employees and set good examples, especially if you're an experienced planter. It doesn't take much energy to support other crew members, and it makes a huge difference to the overall morale of your group. No matter who you are, set an example of up-beat, helpful behaviour. When you're having a tough day, someone else may then help you out in return. Just one person can elevate the mood of an entire group, or bring them down.



Figure 9.08

If You're a Leader, Mentor Your Co-Workers.

Regardless of whether or not you're in a management position, you can act as a role model and give advice and support to people around you.

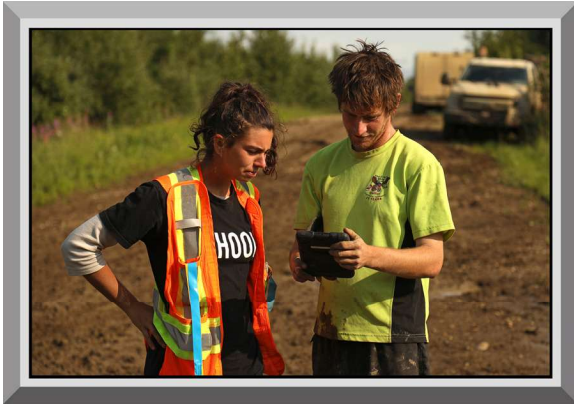


Figure 9.09

Today's Rookies are Tomorrow's Leaders.

The new workers that you're teaching today might eventually teach you a thing or two within a few years, and might become some of your lifelong friends. Working as a team makes your season a lot more enjoyable and efficient.

Exercise respect for company and client, staff, procedures, and equipment. Your planting company is trying to do the same thing that you are – make money. They have years of time, and lots of money invested in this. You have the ability to increase their success. Follow the rules, treat people with respect, and take care of any equipment that belongs to the company. Ultimately, if a planting company makes more money, it's easier for the company to share some of that with employees. If a company suffers from unexpected expenses due to carelessness or negligence of its employees, there will be downward pressure on tree prices.

You'll eventually meet internal and external auditors and inspectors. Don't be scared to ask them questions. They usually have a lot of experience and are happy to share their insights with you, and to listen to your questions and feedback. Many "inspectors" are hired by your own company because your company wants to improve working conditions. If you feel that you're not giving the right answers during an audit, or you're doing something wrong, it's ok. The point of audits and inspections is to make the workplace a better place. If you're eventually the person who is performing an inspection, making up the answers to make it look like "things are great" is just doing yourself and your co-workers a disservice. If something is "wrong" during an audit, don't be reluctant to admit it. Shit happens. Things go wrong. We learn from our mistakes.



Figure 9.10
Internal Inspections are Designed to Improve Operations.

The point of most inspections is to see if there are things that can be fixed or improved. Invariably, this is good for workers in the long term.



Figure 9.11
Audits Benefit the Workforce.

Jordan Tesluk (right) has been doing corporate & safety audits of the tree planting industry for years. He, and other auditors like him, have done more to improve working conditions for planters than most people will ever realize.

Don't think that you have to figure everything out by yourself. If there's a situation that you don't understand, or are trying to deal with, don't be scared to ask someone else for help.

Be on time. Being on time shows respect for your company and also for everyone else on your crew. If you're late, everyone waits and everyone loses money.

On the block, don't cut off another planter. Always finish your area before moving to another piece, doing both the creamy sections AND the difficult parts. Flag areas where needed, to help other planters.

If your crew is walking into a block that isn't roadside, hustle to get your equipment ready so you can walk in with the group. Try not to be a straggler. The crew leader may need to wait for the last person to be ready, to make sure that nobody gets lost on the walk-in. If you're slow, you may be cutting into everyone else's planting time. Also, always make sure you understand where you're going, so you don't get lost. The rest of your crew wants to spend their time planting, not looking for a lost planter.

Remember that planting is part of the bigger picture of basic silviculture obligations. Planting is only one small part of the process of reforestation. While it's an important activity, so are surveying, site preparation, brushing, and spacing.

Respectful Behaviour in Camp Settings

If you're working out of a motel, you have more privacy, so there's less need for being respectful of group etiquette. If you're in a planting camp, here are a few recommendations:

- Don't set your tent up right beside someone else's, without checking in first. Tents will unfortunately have to be in fairly close proximity in a lot of camp locations, but try to keep your tent perhaps 20-30 feet away from your neighbour, instead of four feet away. Sound really carries while people are going to sleep on a calm night. Nobody wants to hear you masturbating before bed.
- Don't play music in the tenting area when others are trying to fall asleep early. A general rule is that 9pm should be a hard curfew on music, guitars, loud conversations, or other noise.
- Don't shower before dinner unless you can be finished quickly enough to be served on time. Cooks hate it if you show up late for dinner because you were in the shower; they have hours of cleanup work that needs to be done after everyone has eaten, so they're on a strict schedule. If there's one person you don't want to upset in a camp, it's the cook.
- If you're the only person in the shower, turn the pump off as you leave, so the pump doesn't run dry (out of fuel) for the next person.
- Lock the shower and outhouse doors when you're using them, so somebody else doesn't accidentally open the door and get a surprise.
- Put the toilet seat down after you're done. Not only does this keep the smell down, it also reduces the opportunity for flies to come in and start breeding. A cloud of flies in the outhouse isn't just annoying, it's also a good way for disease to spread more quickly. Those flies that are buzzing around you have been landing on the human waste that your co-workers left behind.
- Always wash your hands after using the outhouses. This is the number one best way to minimize spread of diseases through the camp.
- If there's a party on the night off, whoever gets up early the next morning should make sure there are no beer cans or alcohol bottles laying around camp. A Client or government inspector doesn't want to visit a camp at 9am on a Wednesday morning and see several dozen empty beer cans on the ground. Camps can get written up for this, and even have government field permits revoked. A party on the night off is fine, but appearances matter, so clean up the mess early the next morning.
- Some people don't like to party on the night off. Some people like to party sober, and don't want to partake in drugs or alcohol. Respect those limits. Shut any loud music off at 11pm, because there are probably people who are trying to sleep.

Harassment & Bullying

The 2020 WFCA Conference in Prince George had some illustrative discussions about harassment and assault within the reforestation and related sectors. It was obvious that the time for change was long overdue. Let's start with some definitions:

- **Workplace Violence:** The attempted or actual use of physical force against a worker, or any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reason to believe that physical force may be used against a worker. Within the context of a reforestation operation, workers may be subject to workplace violence from co-workers, supervisors, managers, employers, clients, or even strangers who visit our worksites. Workplace violence includes obvious actions such as assaults. It also includes fairly obvious actions including shaking fists, wielding weapons, pushing, and throwing objects. Workplace violence also includes non-physical interactions, such as uttering verbal threats, or communicating verbal threats through mediums such as emails, direct messages, texts, or written notes. Although workplace violence can result in physical injury, it can also result in anger, depression, anxiety, guilt, and post-traumatic stress. Above and beyond the regulatory requirements of maintaining a workplace free of violence, employers have a vested interest because workplace violence can impact productivity, result in poor performance, and lead to increased absenteeism and turnover.
- **Workplace Harassment:** Any objectionable or offensive behaviour that is known or should be known to be unwelcome. Harassment includes bullying or other similar conduct, plus comments or displays that threaten the health and safety of an employee. Harassment includes words or statements that are offensive, embarrassing, demeaning, humiliating, or intimidating. Harassment can include indirect remarks, name-calling, jokes or innuendos, and offensive pictures or texts or emails. Workplace harassment also includes sexual harassment, which is a specific category of harassment.
- **Discrimination:** Any unequal, stereotypical, or prejudicial treatment of persons. The Canada Human Rights Act, and the various provincial human rights acts, were all created to protect workers from discrimination based on grounds such as race, religion, age, or gender.
- **Sexual Harassment:** This can include unwelcome sexual suggestions, sexual advances or requests, sexual comments, inappropriate touching, or other conduct of an inappropriate and/or sexual nature. These types of actions create an uncomfortable and hostile work environment. These actions can occur in person, through written communications, through telephone calls, and through the sharing of inappropriate pictures, such as sexual photos or pornography. Consensual banter and consensual relationships are not considered to be harassment, so long as all participants agree. However, engaging in such banter or relationships can be a slippery slope. Consensual banter between two individuals becomes a form of harassment if a third worker overhears the comments or conversation and it makes them feel uncomfortable. Also, if one of the persons in a consensual romantic relationship changes his or her mind, and the other persists, then the situation becomes one of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment includes any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause humiliation to an employee. It can be perceived by that employee as placing a condition of a sexual nature on current employment or employment opportunities. Sexual harassment makes someone feel uncomfortable and/or ashamed. Sexual harassment can be motivated by power, and is often one-sided. Sexual harassment is not necessarily considered a sexual offense unless there is physical touching involved. Sexual harassment does not have to occur on company property or during work hours to be

considered sexual harassment. If someone is harassed because of their gender, it may still be considered sexual harassment.

- **Sexual Assault:** Sexual assault is a criminal offense. An incident is considered to be sexual assault if someone touches you in a sexual way on purpose, directly or indirectly, without your consent. This includes penetration crimes (penetration of a body part by another body part, or penetration of a body part by an object). Sexual assault includes contact with genitalia, breasts, buttocks, or other intimate body parts. Sexual assault also includes exposure of genitalia, breast, buttocks, or other intimate body parts.
- **Consent:** You have to be sober to give consent. Words and behaviours should be considered when giving consent. You have the right to change your mind; consent must be continual.
- **Abuse of Authority:** This can include improper use of position of power or authority. This can occur simultaneously with sexual harassment, but it can also occur as a stand-alone form of harassment, if a manager discriminates or is treating a subordinate unfairly.
- **Reasonable Conduct:** Any *reasonable* conduct of an employer to manage workers during the course of employment is not considered to be harassment. Reasonable actions include job assessments or evaluations, implementation of dress codes, disciplinary action, follow up on absenteeism, changes in work assignments, minor disagreements between co-workers, or coaching and constructive criticism.
- **Duty to Protect:** Employers have a general duty to protect all workers. Employers must take every reasonable precaution to protect all workers within the workplace. Employers are required to do risk assessments for harassment and violence within the workplace, and must create a written code of practice for each in order to deal with these problems. Employers must ensure that the written codes of practice are readily available to all employees. It is recommended that employees be given written and digital copies of these documents at or prior to the commencement of employment, and also that copies are posted in readily visible locations within the workplace. It would be appropriate to post copies of these documents on a camp bulletin board, and also to have copies available in each of the work vehicles. Employers are also required to instruct, train, and supervise persons in order to keep all employees safe within the workplace. The employer's training program must address the required codes of practice.
- **Discrimination:** This is another form of harassment. Discrimination involves the unjust and unfair treatment of a person or group of persons based upon characteristics such as their race, religion, age, or gender identity. Discrimination can include racial slang, slurs, nicknames, negative stereotyping, jokes, innuendos, photos, or images. All forms of discrimination are inappropriate.
- **Indirect Harassment:** Involves any pattern of unwelcome conduct that is not directed at a particular individual, but which results in an uncomfortable or hostile work environment. Indirect harassment also includes conduct/remarks or malicious gossip about an employee that is not directed at him or her at the time. If the employee becomes aware of demeaning remarks or gossip, and is adversely affected as a result, then such indirect comments may constitute workplace harassment.

Workers have the right to know about existing or potential hazards in the workplace. This includes the possibility of being victimized by workplace violence, harassment, sexual harassment, and bullying. Workers have the right to ask questions, and the right to receive information and training about safe working procedures. Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. Workers have the right to participate in safety activities, including the identification of work-related hazards. In turn, employees have the obligation to follow all applicable laws, and must follow the employer's policies and procedures, including codes of practice. Employees are required to report work-related hazards, and to report incidents of violence and harassment.

Often, when an incident of violence or harassment occurs, a worker may be reluctant to report it. This can occur for any number of reasons, including but not limited to guilt, shame, intimidation, fear, belief that the report will not be acted upon, privacy concerns, and other reasons. It is the company's obligation to provide a safe environment, so the employees then feel safe. If an employee does not feel safe, the company has failed. Employees need to be able to report their concerns. Employers should create strong reporting systems, with several alternative reporting options for the worker.

When a worker reports violence or harassment, they should be able to do so without the fear of reprisal or retaliation. The onus of safety falls upon the company, not upon the victim or complainant. The reporting process should include procedures for workers to report a supervisor, crew leader, or any other designated person within the camp/crew or within the company. The reporting process should include multiple reporting options, including external reporting. Reporting should be confidential. Reports should result in follow-up actions and recommended support.

It is important to note that any incident which may be deemed to be extremely serious, such as sexual assault, should not be investigated by the planting company. It should be investigated by the police. An internal investigation performed within the company could actually compromise the case, if it moves to the court systems. Serious investigations should always be left to professionals. If a company starts to investigate an incident and becomes concerned about the potential severity of the case, the investigation can be suspended and referred immediately to professionals.

When an employer investigates violence or harassment, the investigator should be competent, impartial, and objective. The investigation should be prompt, well documented, and confidential. If the incident(s) include possible criminal offenses, the police can investigate criminal offenses under the Criminal Code of Canada (these can include physical assault, sexual assault, and stalking).

Follow-up actions can include corrective measures such as verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension with or without pay, and termination. Police intervention may be warranted. Support measures for the victim might include emotional support and counselling, employee assistance programs (EAP's), post-traumatic incident response procedures, paid leave or paid days off, access to rides to town, access to a hotel room, and assistance with travel arrangements to return home. There are many more potential support measures, but these are a few good examples.

Employers must perform an annual review of their bullying and harassment policies and procedures.

Bullying is another form of harassment. Bullying occurs when the bully exercises power over the victim, perhaps through unjustified criticism or humiliation. This imbalance of power can occur between managers and workers, or between co-workers. Bullying usually involved repeated and aggressive behaviour, and can be verbal or physical.

Gossip is a form of indirect harassment. There is a very fine line between confiding in a friend and spreading gossip about someone, regardless of the validity. Workers should be able to confide in a friend for a support, but must also ensure that this confidence does not result in unwarranted gossip. If you hear gossip, and you feel comfortable and safe about speaking up, you can help to reduce gossip by telling the speaker that you don't want to hear it.

One early warning sign for potential workplace violence includes what are known as "disruptive behaviours." Such behaviours can include: excessive emotional outbursts or mood swings, acting inappropriately, inappropriate comments, aggression, criticizing others, complaints of unfair treatment, constant arguments, change in tone of voice or volume, violation of personal space, disruptive behaviour while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, reference to access to weapons, or disrespect for authority. With appropriate training and instruction, supervisors and crew leaders can learn to recognize these warning signs early. This will allow them to know how to respond, and how to best keep a situation from eventually escalating to violence. Awareness and open communication are important. Ignoring these disruptive behaviours rarely results in them fading away of their own accord.

An employer assesses risk by taking a careful look at the nature of the workplace, the type of work, and the conditions of work. In general, employers typical do this as an overview before the season starts, and come up with a major written safety plan, perhaps referred to as the company's Safety Management System (SMS). However, supervisory staff including camp managers and crew leaders also need to do risk assessments on a daily basis, and at each new worksite.

A person may experience workplace bullying and harassment outside of the traditional workplace. The boundaries of the work environment are not defined by location, but by whether or not the behaviour is in some ways associated with employment. In the traditional world, there are many examples of environments in which someone may experience work-related harassment, including business trips, conferences, office parties, and social gatherings. A remote work camp is still considered to be a workplace. Various forms of harassment can occur in remote work camps, and employers need to take efforts to eliminate these situations. Harassment can be significantly reduced with proper education and training of management and workers.

If you are physically attacked, call out for help if you can. Yell or scream loudly. If other people are in the proximity, make a scene. If you are being pulled or dragged, drop to the ground and roll, and try to escape and run to safety. If you are on the block, can you blow a whistle or horn, or call for help on

the radio? After the incident, it is very important to consider informing co-workers and management immediately. Nobody is obliged to make a report. It is always up to the victim to decide whether they want to report the incident, and if so, whom they should report it to. If there are bystanders or witnesses, those persons have the ability to report to a supervisor or other appropriate representative of the company. It is up to the victim to decide whether or not they want to make a report to the police. Regardless of whether or not the police are notified, a written incident report can be filed with the employer. This type of report can be useful for future evidence, and is a good part of due diligence.

If dealing with a potentially violent person, there are a number of actions that you should follow. Focus on the person, and show interest. Remain calm, and try to calm the other person down (however, it is not constructive to say "calm down" or give what appear to be commands). Speak quietly and simply. Stand in a non-challenging manner. Listen carefully, and ask questions. Acknowledge how the person feels. Try not to stand too close to the person. Do not confront, challenge, or antagonize the person. Try to ensure that you have support from nearby co-workers, if possible, without making the situation appear threatening to the person causing the problem. Notify management at the earliest possible opportunity.

As mentioned already, harassment includes any objectionable or offensive behaviour that is known or should be known to be unwelcome. Harassment includes words or statements that are offensive, embarrassing, demeaning, humiliating, or intimidating. Harassment can include indirect remarks, name-calling, jokes or innuendos, and offensive pictures or texts or emails. Harassment typically occurs more than once, and often involves repeated words or actions, or a pattern of harassing behaviour.

An employer should come up with specific lists of prevention measures that protect workers. Depending on various hazards, it is usually possible to come up with options that either eliminate the risk, or at least reduce the risk (possibly through the use of engineering controls or administrative controls). This approach is valid for all types of safety hazards, but it is important to remember that prevention measures can apply specifically to reducing the chance of workplace violence and harassment. Management need to be trained properly, to ensure that workers understand and take advantage of prevention measures.

If you are harassed in the workplace, speak up and let the harasser know how you feel. Ask the harasser to stop. You should only have to do this a single time.

If you are harassed, document all incidents. Confide in a trusted co-worker or a designated contact person. All camps/crews should have at least two persons that are designated as listeners or contacting for reporting purposes. Report the incident. Your company should have a clear and detailed set of reporting procedures and options, which is accessible to all employees. The best approach is for the company to both reporting procedures and also to share copies of the procedures with each employee in printed and digital form. Know your company's policy and procedures.

Ensure that an incident report is filed, either by submitting one yourself or asking a co-worker or manager to help you submit a report. Most importantly, do not blame yourself, and do not retaliate.

In most jurisdictions, it is mandatory for the employer to implement procedures for a worker to make a report to an appropriate investigator when the employer, supervisor, or person acting on behalf of the employer is the alleged bully or harasser.

Companies should attempt to discourage members of management from fraternizing with employees, and from entering into romantic or sexual relationships with employees. These types of relationships can include a power dynamic that could have catastrophic results if anything goes wrong.

If you see someone else being harassed at work, you should not ignore the issue. Report the incident to an appropriate person within the camp, to ensure that the incident comes to the attention of management. While reports cannot always be made anonymously, depending on the specifics of the incident, there should always be an option whereby you can make a report to a designated harassment and safety officer within the camp, who can then pass the report along to management in an anonymous manner. It is always important to speak up. If you say nothing, the harassment may continue, and the harassers will think that you agree with their actions. Lead by example and stand up for the victim. In most jurisdictions, workers are required to report bullying or harassment if observed or experienced in the workplace. For example, in British Columbia, this duty to report is enshrined in section 116(1)(a) of the Workers' Compensation Act.

If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation with a co-worker, one possible phrase to defuse the situation and decline an advance could be, "Let's just keep it professional."

BC's Extension of Workplace law can help illustrate the point that a bush camp is still considered to be a workplace. You should never have to fear for your safety within the workplace, but some people like to keep an air horn in their tent, in case they want to use it as a signal requesting assistance.

You have the right to work in a workplace that is free of harassment.

Here are some additional resources:

Bullying Canada - A resource organization. Visit www.bullyingcanada.ca or call 877-352-4497.

RCMP - A reporting agency. Contact the RCMP for complaints that involve physical violence and/or assault. Assault involves an imminent threat or attempt to physically touch or strike a person in an offensive manner, regardless of whether or not contact has been made. The RCMP does not accept criminal reports submitted digitally/online. You must report crimes related to harassment/assault to your local detachment. For emergencies, call 911.

More info: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/relationship-violence

WorkSafe - A reporting agency. If you are a worker and have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment in your workplace, you must report it to your employer. If your employer does not take reasonable steps to address the incident, you can call the Canadian Prevention Information Line at 1-888-621-7233 to talk to an officer. Let them know which province the complaint originated in.

Victims' Help Lines - VictimLink BC is 1-800-563-0808. Alberta's One Line is 310-1818. Ontario's is 1-888-579-2888. Google "victims help line" plus the province name for numbers in additional provinces.

211 - This is a nation-wide number (similar to 411 or 911) that works in all provinces, which is meant to provide information and referrals to health, human, and social service organizations.

Lawyer - A resource to help you pursue legal options. Visit www.cba.org/public/find-a-lawyer and look for a lawyer in your area that specializes in Human Rights issues in the dropdown menu.

Human Rights Commissions - Each province has its own Human Rights Commission. For example, British Columbia has www.bchumanrights.ca - The Human Rights Commissions are reporting agencies that you may contact if you have a complaint about discrimination or harassment. In Alberta use albertahumanrights.ab.ca and in Ontario use www.ohrc.on.ca - you can google the links for each additional province.

NSDP - The Northern Society for Domestic Peace is a resource organization, and is also involved with awareness and training in planting camps. Visit www.domesticpeace.ca to learn about the many resources that they share, especially the "Camp" resources.

Sharp Workplaces – This is another organization dedicated to eliminating workplace harassment, and is based in BC. There are a lot of resources on their website, and their organization receives financial support from the Canadian Department of Justice. Visit clasbc.net/sharpworkplaces to learn more, or call 1-888-685-6222.

If you're trying to find any of the above links quickly, remember this one simple link:
www.replant.ca/harassment

Interacting With Society

Behave in a way that fosters a positive image of the industry. Communities around the areas that you work in are watching you. When you come into town on days off, you're noticed, no matter if you're in laundromats, cafés, banks, walking through the streets, or hanging out in a park. For residents of a small town, a tree planter stands out like a sore thumb. Your behaviour in their community is noticed, and talked about. These communities can support or condemn the licensees whose operating area you're working in. Try to do a good job of representing yourself and your fellow planters in a positive way. Smile and say hello to the locals, and treat their community as if it

was your own home. Your future income can depend on this. You never know when the random person that you meet on the street is the general manager of the mill that you're working for, or your forester's boss.

Don't trash motel rooms. We have a hard enough time being allowed to rent rooms as it is. Be respectful of the people who have to clean these rooms after we leave, and try to do a bit of a clean-up before you go.

Laundromats are a particularly risky area for creating a bad image for our industry. Don't overload washers and dryers! I've seen this happen many times, and my camp has frequently been asked to pay for repairs to laundry machines that were damaged because planters were trying to save \$2 by stuffing a machine with 3.8x the amount of clothing that the machine should ever be able to handle. If you really need to save money on laundry, do it by washing your clothing in a stream near camp, and/or hanging clothing outside your tent to air-dry. But please, don't ruin machines at public laundromats. Here are a few related tips:

- Shake off your clothing and bags outside the laundromat, rather than inside on their floor. If you track mud into the establishment, and you see a broom handy, try to sweep it up somewhat. It only takes two or three minutes, and goes a long way to earning the respect of other people in the facility.
- Set a timer or alarm on your phone and make sure that you're back when your load is finished. Other people may be waiting to use the machines. Don't expect others to transfer your laundry for you.
- Do not leave your belongings in the laundromat when you leave. Take a good look around to make sure that you haven't forgotten anything. Far too many planters go back to camp at the end of a day off, but forget to bring their laundry with them.
- Clean the lint traps on the dryer, before and after. Your clothes will dry better if the lint trap is clean.
- Finally, make sure you do your laundry early enough in the day that the rest of the crew isn't sitting around at dinner, waiting to head back to camp while you put your wet clothing through the dryer. That's a really good way to piss off your co-workers.



Figure 9.12

Chaos at the Laundromat.

Don't overload machines. We break too many laundry machines. If you're so broke that you feel the need to shove three loads of laundry into a single machine, consider washing some of your clothing in a creek near camp and let it air-dry.

Treatment of Co-Workers

We already mentioned the Canada Human Rights Act once. Think about how it applies to your co-workers. The Canada Human Rights Act is in place to protect Canadians from discrimination due to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, and disabilities. Don't harass a person based on any of these differences. Tree planting is hard enough on a person as it is.

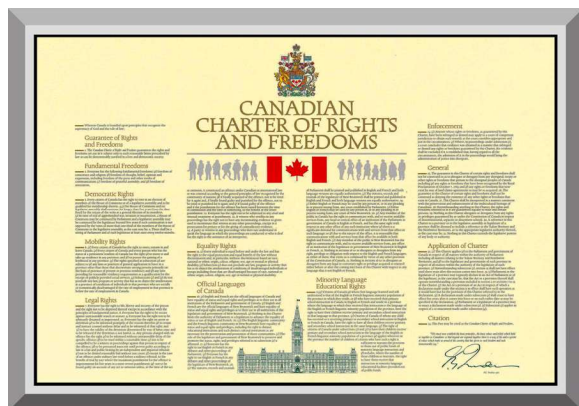


Figure 9.14
Canada Human Rights Act.

In addition to the Canada Human Rights Act, the provinces have their own individual provincial versions.

The industry needs to work harder to embrace diversity. It is not enough simply to hire indigenous workers and people of colour. All employees need to feel welcome and to feel that they are part of the team. Diversity without inclusion is harmful.

Speaking of diversity, I'd like to mention gender for a moment. During its infancy, the tree planting industry was traditionally very male-dominated. Nowadays, a significant portion of the workforce is made up of women, and this change has definitely improved the industry. Participation by women in positions within higher management is still not as high as it should be, but that's also changing slowly.



Figure 9.14
The Planting Industry Needs More Women in Management.

Our industry should not be so heavily male-dominated. Over the past decade, the workforce has certainly become more gender-balanced, but the management side of things needs to improve.

We previously mentioned that within BC, the people who are the direct supervisors of planters are often called foremen. In Ontario, the term crew boss is quite common. That's good. Many companies in BC are now switching to the use of the term "crew leader" in place of foreman. Crew

leader is an appropriate term, since unlike foreman, it's gender-neutral. I often hear "crew leaders" shortened to "crew leads" or just "leads."

A separate concern is the fact that in the planting industry, a "supervisor" usually refers to the person who is in charge of a planting camp. However, in a WorkSafe or legal liability sense, a "supervisor" refers to any person who directly supervises the work of other employees. It's important to understand that anyone who is overseeing other employees is directly responsible, in a legal sense, for the health and safety of those workers. Some people misunderstand the definition of a supervisor, thinking that a camp supervisor has a lot of legal liability whereas a crew leader does not. That's not correct. Both the camp supervisor AND the crew leader are very responsible for people working under them.

In a perfect world, perhaps the title of camp supervisors could be changed to "camp managers" and the title of all crew leaders and crew bosses could be changed to "supervisors" or "crew supervisors." Unfortunately, the planting industry is so fragmented that even if a number of people started to do that, it would still be years before the changes really sunk in on a broad scale. The takeaway lesson here is that there really isn't a standard nomenclature within the industry for some things, so you should be open-minded and expect the unexpected. In fact, that's probably a good way of approaching just about everything relating to planting. As the industry continues to evolve, we'll probably see many more changes that challenge traditional ways of doing things.

Here are a few additional tips that will help you be considerate to your co-workers:

- When closing the door or tailgate of a truck, make sure that no buckles on planting bags or day-bags will be caught and crushed. Close the tailgate very carefully when gear is piled in the back of the truck.
- A loose jerry can in the back of a truck can easily spill onto peoples' gear. Don't throw a jerry can on top of planting equipment or day-bags. Make sure that it is sitting on the floor of the truck, and tied in place with the lid screwed tightly shut.
- Be respectful of chargers for electronic devices. Don't let them dangle on the floor of the truck, even if the truck is clean. They could get plugged with mud, or crushed by someone's foot. Many charger cords have been ruined by these two problems.
- Avoid loud music or talking in the tenting area after 9pm, when others are trying to sleep.
- Don't take your socks off inside the truck on the drive home. Don't leave dirty clothing or garbage in the crew truck at the end of the day.
- Put the lid down on the toilets in camp outhouses after you're done using them, so the porta-potties don't smell as badly, or attract as many flies. Having fewer flies helps to prevent the spread of fecal diseases.
- When you're making your lunch from a buffet station, use the tongs or sandwich gloves (instead of fingers) to help prevent touching food that your co-workers will eat. Everyone else will also touch the handles of the tongs, but at least their germs won't be on your lunch.
- When planting up to a boundary line between two pieces that has been flagged in advance by the crew leader or a checker, be respectful. If you're the first planter working up to the line,

try to plant your trees directly on the line, so the planter in the other piece will be able to see and locate them easily. Don't leave a gap adjacent to the line, especially if there's a lot of slash along the line. Imagine that you're the one who will eventually be working the other side of the line, trying to spot and correctly space off trees.

- Flag your first line heavily. If someone else in an adjacent piece has to work up to your trees, make sure that the outside row is flagged very visibly, to make it easier for them to spot the seedlings.

Bragging About Tallies

I know, we're all out there to make money. However, bragging about tallies often makes other people cringe, and it can lead to resentment. It's great to be proud of what you've accomplished, but it can be just as satisfying to quietly say, "I had a good day" as it is to quantify those numbers. Sure, hitting a PB (personal best) is something that you may want to share, to a limited audience of other planters. Remember though, that some of those people might get jealous and think that the crew leader is favouring you, or that you only accomplished what you did because you got some cream. It's human nature to think that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

It's an especially bad idea to talk about your tallies in front of anyone other than people on your crew. I've seen a few cases where a planter bragged to a checker about how many trees they had planted the previous day, only to regret opening their mouth because they checker went straight into their piece with a vengeance, assuming that there must be a lot of bad trees. I've seen a few cases where a planter bragged to a forester about how much money they were making, only to have the forester bring this up with the employer later during price negotiations. Sometimes, a forester will hear about one isolated day of extremely high earnings, and assume that all of the planters make that much every day, and try to lower subsequent prices. It happens more often than you think. These foresters forget about the high expenses we deal with for travel and equipment, the extreme physical capabilities that are required, the short earnings season, and the fact that there are a lot of part-days and inevitable planting challenges that bring average daily earnings down much lower than those best days. Thankfully, not all foresters feel this way, and some genuinely want planters to have a great time and make a lot of money. But again, bragging about how much you made can very quickly backfire, especially when you may have made more money that day than the checker or forester who run the contract.

If you ever see another planter bragging like this, you don't have to call them out and embarrass them. But it might be a good idea to find a time to talk to them discretely later on, to point out some of the potential repercussions that they may not have thought of. No planter wants to see a bitter checker coming into their piece.

If a checker or forester asks you how many trees you planted, or what the price was, just say, "I prefer not to talk about those things." That's a good firm answer, plain and simple.

Partner Planting

Partner planting is the term for when you're sharing a piece with another planter. In some companies, planters always are assigned to their own pieces (except that another planter might come in to help you finish your piece as the block is closing up). In some companies, planting in pairs or groups of three is common. In many companies, there's no standard, and a crew may have some people that always plant alone, but other planters who always plant with each other.

"Working alone" policies suggest that nobody should be working by themselves, unless a scheduled check-in policy is in place. This is a common safety practice that applies to a lot of industries. However, two planters do not have to work in the same piece in order to meet this recommended requirement. If two planters work in their own pieces which are beside each other, or across the road from each other, they can be said to be planting partners who keep an eye on each other, and who can each hear if the other shouts or whistles for assistance.

WorkSafeBC is attuned to the safety benefits of having people working with partners, rather than in their own pieces, so we'll probably see more emphasis on this trend in the coming decade.

If you're working with a partner, you might have a friend whom you always plant with. This is a good situation, because you'll become accustomed to each others' strengths and weaknesses. You'll hopefully motivate and support each other, pushing each other to maximize your production and quality. Your crew leader may also assign random partners frequently throughout the season, in which case you need to learn to work effectively with these co-workers. Here are some behaviours which help:

- Many people find it harder to "see trees" that someone else has planted. To solve this, maybe each person should get their own side of their piece.
- If part of the piece is rough, and the rest is creamy, make sure you each share the good and bad. In some cases, planters who are close friends who work together frequently and who are of similar speeds will just always split their tallies equally, so it doesn't matter if one person spends more time in the creamy ground.
- If you don't normally use flagger to mark trees, but you're put into a piece with someone who relies on flagger, make the effort to flag some of your trees, especially at points where your lines turn.
- Some people just don't like to talk (or listen) while they're planting. Get that established quickly, and respect boundaries. Some people only like to talk briefly while they're bagging up at the cache.
- Communication is important. Even if you and your planting partner aren't talkative, it's helpful to give each other a heads-up about things which can improve efficiency, such as, "I'll plant everything behind this alder patch, you don't have to come in here."

Sometimes, as a block is closing up, there may only be one or two pieces remaining with open ground, and a number of planters will be thrown into the piece to help close it up, or so they can bag out. Any time you get more than two or three planters working a piece together, it's referred to as cattle planting, because it's like having a herd of cattle in the piece.

If it looks like you'll probably share pieces frequently throughout the season, try to find a planting partner with whom you work well, and let your crew leader know that the two of you would prefer to typically work together.

Animals in the Workplace

The presence of dogs is a very contentious and polarizing issue within the industry. Almost everybody likes dogs. Not every planter likes having dogs in camps. I've seen heated discussions on various social media platforms that brought up arguments both for and against the presence of dogs in the workplace.

Celine Rytz did a great presentation about "Dogs in the Workplace" at the 2023 WFCFA conference, which was streamed online. It was an objective and informed presentation about the issues involved. You can see that presentation by visiting: www.replant.ca/dogs

Hospital Visits

If you think that you might need to go to the hospital on a day off to treat an injury, deal with it as early as possible.

If you know in the morning that it's a strong possibility, don't wait until 5pm to tell your crew leader that you need to go to the hospital. Deciding to seek medical advice at the end of a day off presents an unnecessary challenge for the crew leader or driver who needs to take care of you. The earlier that you get to the hospital on a day off, the faster you'll be treated and subsequently discharged.

Wait times at medical facilities are generally a lot longer in the evenings because the hospital probably has fewer staff on duty. I've often seen planters who went to the hospital at 7pm, then don't get admitted and treated until at least 1am, so it might be 3am by the time they get back to camp. By that point, they're so tired that they miss another day of work, and the driver or crew leader who took care of their transportation is also highly fatigued.

Stashing

Stashing is the illegal disposal of trees by burying, burning, dumping, or other means. Trees are supposed to be planted, one at a time, not “strategically placed with no chance of growth.” Planters who are caught or suspected of stashing trees are usually terminated immediately. This is a problem that is not treated lightly by crew leaders or supervisors.

Nowadays, it is quite easy to determine when stashing is a potential issue on a block. The size of all blocks is measured by GPS as standard procedure. By comparing the number of trees claimed by planters on a block with the statistical totals (proper plotted density multiplied by actual block size), a discrepancy will show up immediately if trees are stashed. This assessment is done routinely on every block by both supervisors and foresters. Even a small discrepancy of a few hundred trees will be obvious in the numbers, and lead to further investigation. The statistical accuracy of GPS measurements and FS 704 sampling accuracy make stashing a losing proposition. Supervisors and other internal and external staff also audit planters’ pieces frequently and randomly, as part of a regular program of due diligence.

To save yourself, your crew leader, and your crew a lot of hassle, be honest. Don’t try stashing, not even an “innocent” bundle. It’s not worth it. There’s a good chance that you’ll get caught before long, and putting your job and reputation at risk is not worth it for a few dollars. And for anyone who contemplates stashing because they’re simply embarrassed by being a slow planter (rather than for unethical financial gain), you shouldn’t ever be embarrassed about your planting totals. Everybody plants at a different speed. Not everybody can be the fastest planter.

“Woodlining” trees means to plant them on the inside of the woodline, within the block. If you’re trying to bag out after closing a block, trees at slightly high density are less likely to catch the attention of the forester/checker than trees beside a road in the middle of the block. Woodlining does not mean planting the trees in the woods outside the block boundary, and it certainly doesn’t mean tossing bundles into the woodline.

If you think someone on your crew might be stashing, talk to your crew leader or supervisor about it quietly. Your concern alone won’t be enough for a person to be disciplined, but the supervisor can discretely assess that planter’s production to determine whether their numbers make sense. Remember, the actions of someone else who is stashing can hurt you as much as themselves. I’ve seen several occasions where entire crews (and the crew’s leader) have had their employment terminated abruptly due to the actions of a few guilty individuals, and as a planter, I certainly wouldn’t tolerate another planter on my own crew who is stashing. You wouldn’t want to be the innocent bystander who is harmed by this kind of behaviour, would you? Stashing trees just isn’t worth the risk.

Indigenous Relations

This book needs to have a proper section for indigenous relations. I'm starting to research and develop a framework to include relevant information in the 2027 edition of Step By Step. I'll also add that to the Replant website at www.replant.ca/indigenous

I hope that many members of the planting community who aren't intimately familiar with indigenous history and the current cultural identities of various indigenous groups would be willing to build a better understanding of these peoples and nations within Canada. Unfortunately, there is still some entrenched racism within the settler population as a whole, and that simply isn't acceptable in this day and age. We can and must do better.

If you'd like a place to start gaining some knowledge about various indigenous territories and how they cover various geographic areas in which we work, visit this website: www.native-land.ca

That website is a great resource when it comes to an initial understanding of the distribution of the various cultural groups throughout Canada. There are also options to turn off highlighting of the territories, and to instead highlight the map based on languages or treaties. For example, when you have just the treaties highlighted, you can see that the Maritimes are mostly covered by the Peace & Friendship treaty, large parts of eastern Ontario and Quebec (plus Newfoundland and Labrador) are unceded, northern Ontario and most of the Prairies are covered by the "Numbered Treaties," and British Columbia is mostly unceded. However, the land in the Maritimes is mostly unceded because unlike most of the other treaties, the Peace & Friendship treaty did not involve the First Nations surrendering rights to lands and resources.

If you'd like to start building a better understanding of indigenous issues in Canada, here's a short list of books that I'd recommend reading to get you started, in no particular order:

[Unreconciled](#) (Jesse Wentze)

[Unsettling Canada](#) (Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M Derrickson)

[Highway of Tears](#) (Jessica McDiarmid)

[Our Story, Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past](#) (various contributors but foreword by Adrienne Clarkson)

[The Inconvenient Indian](#) (Thomas King)

[Accounting For Genocide](#) (Dean Neu & Richard Therrien)

[Indigenomics: Taking a Seat at the Economic Table](#) (Carol Anne Hilton)

The TWIG website has some great information. Visit: www.treeworkersindustrialgroup.work

There is also a good course on the Coursera website which is called "Indigenous Canada," sponsored by the University of Alberta and taught by Dr. Paul L. Gareau. Visit: coursera.org/learn/indigenous-canada

For more photo and video resources associated with this chapter of the book, visit:
www.replant.ca/training/behaviour