



WOOD PELLET ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

# 2025 SAFETY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

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# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



## OUR MISSION

To improve the wood pellet industry's collective safety performance, to earn a reputation with regulatory authorities and the public as an industry that is highly effective at managing safety, and to learn and share best practices regarding safety.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee's responsibilities are:

- To develop strategies for continuous improvement of safety and promote to Wood Pellet Association of Canada (WPAC) members.
- To communicate to WPAC's membership the importance of developing a safety culture.
- Readily and openly share safety and maintain our collective commitment to cooperate on all safety matters.
- To circulate safety news, developments and reports to WPAC members.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

The Safety Committee is appointed by WPAC's Board of Directors to discharge the Board's responsibilities relating to WPAC's safety objectives.

The Safety Committee reports to the Board regularly.

## BC FOREST SAFETY COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP

The BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC) is the Health & Safety Association (HSA) for WPAC. Membership is funded through a WorkSafeBC payroll levy on British Columbia (BC) pellet producers, passed on to BCFSC.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR 2025

1. Process Safety Management
2. Improving Rotary Drum Dryer Safety
3. Mobile Equipment
4. Proposed New WorkSafeBC Combustible Dust Regulation
5. Review of Previous Safety Initiatives and Evaluate Impact
6. Mental Health
7. Musculoskeletal Injuries (MSI)
8. Winter Fibre Truck Loading/ Unloading
9. Communications

# FOCUS AREA DETAILS

## PROCESS SAFETY MANAGEMENT (PSM) IMPLEMENTATION

WPAC, in collaboration with BCFSC, continues to advance the Process Safety Management (PSM) initiative for wood pellet facilities. Building on the foundation laid by the 2023 project, *Integrating Process Safety Management into Canadian Wood Pellet Facilities that Generate Combustible Wood Dust*, funded through a WorkSafeBC Innovation at Work grant, the WPAC Safety Committee has undertaken several critical steps to ensure the effective implementation of PSM across the industry.

A PSM Steering Committee has been established to oversee the project and guide its strategic direction. Progress has been made, including developing a comprehensive implementation guide, work plan, and milestones with a timeline and detailed processes to support the adoption of PSM.

The WPAC Safety Committee also developed self-assessment worksheets for PSM elements and sought industry feedback. The feedback received was implemented to enhance the tools' practicality and effectiveness. These efforts are designed to support wood pellet operations in identifying and addressing gaps in PSM practices.

### Actions

Based on the implementation strategy outlined in the research project, the PSM implementation areas of focus for 2025 include:

1. **Phase 1 implementation:** Development and provision of support for the formalization of PSM elements, corrective action plans, and implementation for Phase 1 PSM elements, along with others identified as high-priority on a site-specific basis.  
**Target:** Q1-Q3 2025.
2. **Implementation metrics:** Development of PSM implementation key performance indicators and metrics.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
3. **Gap analysis worksheets:** Rollout of PSM element gap analysis worksheets to all operations.  
**Target:** Q2 2025.

### THREE PHASE PROCESS

The implementation of the PSM elements has been broken down into three phases so it is achievable for smaller organizations.

#### PHASE 1

- Accountability
- Process safety culture
- Process risk assessment and risk reduction
- Management of change (MOC)
- Investigation
- Key performance indicators (KPIs)

#### PHASE 2

- Conduct of operations – senior management responsibility
- Process knowledge and documentation
- Human factors
- Training and competency
- Process and equipment integrity

#### PHASE 3

- Emergency management planning
- Project review and design procedures
- Audit process
- Regulations
- Standards and codes
- Enhancement of process safety knowledge



## MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Every workplace has unique hazards that can impact the safe operation of mobile equipment that must be identified, assessed and controlled to minimize the risk of damage or injury. To fully understand the risks associated with mobile equipment in wood pellet plants, the following action items will happen:

### Actions

1. **Bow-tie analysis session:** Hold a four-hour bowtie analysis session on Mobile Equipment and Pedestrian Interface. The focus will be on improving pedestrian awareness around mobile equipment, as well as site layout and work processes. A summary report will be published.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
2. **Symposium:** Hold a symposium on Mobile Equipment Safety.  
**Target:** Q2 2025.
3. **Article:** Publish an article in Canadian Biomass Magazine.  
**Target:** Q3 2025.

## IMPROVING ROTARY DRUM DRYER SAFETY

The project was initiated through a symposium held in April 2024, which led to a dedicated Working Group reviewing past incidents and developing enhanced, safer operating procedures.

### Actions

1. **Regular meetings:** The Working Group will continue to meet regularly to collaborate on safety improvements and provide updates to the WPAC safety committee.  
**Target:** Monthly meetings.
2. **Report:** The Working Group will compile and submit a comprehensive report outlining findings and recommendations for the safer operation of rotary drum dryers.  
**Target:** Q3 2025.
3. **Communications:** The Safety Committee will review the Working Group's findings and ensure the results are communicated broadly across the pellet industry to promote safety improvements.  
**Target:** Q4 2025.
4. **Webinar:** The Safety Committee will organize a webinar to share key learnings and safety practices from the project, further enhancing awareness and implementation of safer operations within the industry.  
**Target:** Q4 2025.

## PROPOSED NEW WorkSafeBC COMBUSTIBLE DUST REGULATION

In response to recent proposed amendments to Part 6, Substance Specific Requirements, sections 6.133 to 6.167 – Combustible Dusts, of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*, this project has been initiated to help companies comply with the new regulation. As part of the action plan:

### Actions

1. **WPAC/WorkSafeBC meeting:** The Safety Committee will meet with Mike Tasker from WorkSafeBC to explore and clarify the changes in the regulation.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
2. **Article:** The Safety Committee will publish an article summarizing the proposed regulatory changes and impact. The article will also prompt operations to assess their readiness to implement these changes, providing a proactive approach to compliance.  
**Target:** Q2-Q3 2025.
3. **Communications:** Encourage pellet plant employees to attend the 2025 BCFSC workshops on Combustible Dust New Regulations.  
**Target:** Q4 2025.

## REVIEW OF PREVIOUS SAFETY INITIATIVES AND EVALUATE IMPACT

Since its formation in 2014, the WPAC Safety Committee has launched numerous projects to enhance safety standards across the industry. Four key projects have been selected for evaluation to determine whether the projects have led to meaningful improvements. These include:

- Online Operator Training Program, which aimed to boost safety awareness and operational competency ([wpaclearning.com](http://wpaclearning.com));
- Safer Operation of Belt Dryers, focused on reducing operational risks;
- Deflagration Isolation efforts, designed to prevent combustible dust explosions; and
- Critical Control Management, which aimed to ensure the identification and management of high-risk safety controls.

The evaluation will help the Safety Committee gauge the impact of these initiatives and determine if they have effectively moved the needle in improving overall safety performance. For this initiative to be meaningful, it needs to be implemented over several years rather than just one year.

### Actions

1. **Surveys and interviews:** Conduct surveys or interviews with operators, supervisors and safety officers to gather qualitative feedback on these initiatives' effectiveness and practical impact.

**Target:** Q4 2025.

2. **Benchmarking:** Compare performance data (such as safety incident rates, training completion and compliance scores) against past performance to determine if these initiatives have led to improvements.

**Target:** Q4 2025.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is an integral component of overall safety and well-being in the workplace. A workforce struggling with stress, anxiety or burnout is at a higher risk of making critical errors, compromising workplace safety and reducing productivity. By integrating mental health initiatives into safety programs, companies can foster a culture of psychological safety, enhance employee resilience and improve operational outcomes.

### Actions

1. **Host a mental health webinar:** Organize a webinar led by a qualified mental health professional to discuss common workplace mental health challenges, stress management techniques and available support resources.

**Target:** Q2 2025.

2. **Incorporate mental health in the 2025 Safety Summit:** Dedicate a session at the annual Safety Summit to mental health, focusing on topics such as the relationship between mental health and workplace safety, coping strategies for high-pressure environments and promoting psychological resilience. Also include a panel discussion or a keynote speaker with expertise in workplace mental health.

**Target:** Q3 2025.

3. **Conduct a mental health survey:** Distribute a survey to gather employee feedback on mental health needs and stressors in the workplace. Use the insights to tailor initiatives and track progress over time.

**Target:** Q3 2025.

## MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURIES (MSI)

Musculoskeletal injuries (MSI) are among the most common workplace injuries, particularly in physically demanding industries like wood pellet manufacturing. These injuries can result from repetitive motions, overexertion or awkward postures. They have a significant impact on employee well-being, productivity and safety performance. By addressing MSIs proactively, companies can minimize injury risks, improve workplace ergonomics and promote a healthier workforce.

### Actions

- 1. Targeted crew talks for supervisors:** Develop and deliver focused crew talks for supervisors, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to address MSI risks and promote prevention strategies with their teams.  
**Target:** Q1-Q2 2025.
- 2. Regulatory compliance assessment:** Conduct an industry-wide assessment of regulatory requirements related to MSIs and evaluate the current compliance status. Use the findings to identify gaps and prioritize improvement initiatives.  
**Target:** Q2 2025.
- 3. Celebrate innovations in MSI prevention:** Identify and celebrate innovative practices or tools developed within the industry to reduce MSI risks. Highlight and recognize the individuals or teams behind these innovations as part of the safety initiative.  
**Target:** Q2-Q3 2025.
- 4. Training workshop session at the 2025 Safety Summit:** Organize a dedicated workshop during the 2025 Safety Summit to address MSI prevention. This session will include practical strategies, case studies and discussions on implementing ergonomic solutions in the workplace.  
**Target:** Q3 2025.

## WINTER FIBRE TRUCK LOADING/UNLOADING

Winter conditions pose unique safety challenges for pellet plant truck loading and unloading operations. Slippery surfaces, reduced visibility and cold weather hazards can increase the risk of incidents, impacting driver and worker safety. Implementing targeted safety measures for winter operations can help mitigate risks, ensure compliance with regulations and foster a safe working environment.

### Actions

- 1. Form a Working Group:** Establish a small, focused Working Group comprising plant supervisors and safety professionals to oversee the development and implementation of these initiatives.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
- 2. Develop a revised standard operating procedure (SOP) for winter truck loading/unloading:** Review and update the SOP for truck loading and unloading to incorporate winter-specific risks and mitigation measures. Ensure the revised SOP is accessible to all relevant personnel.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
- 3. Incident reviews and lessons learned:** Create a platform for sharing and reviewing winter-related incidents and near-misses. Use these reviews to implement lessons learned and improve safety measures for future winter operations.  
**Target:** Q1 2025.
- 4. Driver safety resources:** Develop and distribute winter-specific safety guidelines for truck drivers, including best practices for parking, handling tarps and securing loads in snowy or icy conditions. Include a checklist for safe operations in extreme weather.  
**Target:** Q4 2025.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Actions

1. **Monthly safety calls:** Hold monthly Safety Committee conference calls at 11:00 a.m. PST, every second Wednesday of the month. Follow good practices regarding notification, agenda preparation and recording minutes.
2. **Safety Hero:** As part of our commitment to safety in the workplace, it's crucial to acknowledge employees who support safety. This may include leading by example, supporting other staff and reporting incidents. WPAC Safety Committee members are to nominate a worker who promotes and supports safety at their organization. This award will take place every two months. Nominations are to be sent to Gord Murray ([gord@pellet.org](mailto:gord@pellet.org)) or can be submitted at [pellet.org/safety/safety-hero-award/](http://pellet.org/safety/safety-hero-award/).  
**Target:** Every two months.
3. **WorkSafe BC HSA amendments:** Review and summarize all HSA amendments proposed by WorkSafeBC as they are released. Discuss each amendment with the Safety Committee. Respond to WorkSafeBC regarding proposed HSA amendments.
4. **Safety share:** Continue monthly *Sharing Safety* agenda topic.
5. **Biannual WPAC Safety Committee/WorkSafeBC meetings:** The Safety Committee will meet twice a year with WorkSafeBC to share progress on the Work Plan, to learn about WorkSafeBC's concerns as they emerge and to demonstrate to WorkSafeBC the ongoing commitment of WPAC members to safety.  
**Targets:** June 2025 and before November 30, 2025.
6. **BCFSC quarterly forums:** Participate in the BCFSC – Forest Industry Multi Sector Safety Forum.  
**Target:** Quarterly.



7. **Safety alerts:** Implement safety alerts as each incident is experienced. Submit incidents to BCFSC and change the branding to “Pellets.”  
**Target:** Ongoing.
8. **Articles:** Write and publish regular articles on the safety topics and focus areas for 2025.  
**Target:** Monthly.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PLAN

Progress on the Work Plan will be part of the agenda for the monthly Safety Committee meetings. Monthly agendas will include specific work items for review, with committee members assigned to lead and report on tasks. Updates will be provided, and progress will be documented in the meeting minutes.