

First Safetree certificates

WAYDE LINDSAY HAS BECOME THE FIRST FORESTRY worker to receive a Safetree Professional Tree Faller certificate, presented at the Southern Wood Council awards event in Dunedin.

Wayde works for Shane Griffin Logging, which contracts to Wenita Forest Products, and was one of four tree fallers who received a certificate at the event, as covered earlier in this magazine.

The award confirms that Wayde meets the requirements to be deemed competent as a professional, industry-certified manual tree faller. His name has gone onto a national register run by the Forest Industry Safety Council (FISC), of people certified as currently competent to undertake specific forestry tasks.

Shane Griffin Logging and Wenita Forests Products now have industry recognition that Wayde has the skills needed to fell trees professionally and safely. They can give that assurance to potential clients when tendering for work. Anyone else Wayde goes to work for can also have that confidence.

Wayde's award ceremony formally kicked off the Safetree Professional Forest Worker Certification scheme, one of FISC's priority projects. The scheme provides an industry-recognised, nationwide mechanism to assess and certify that workers are currently competent to do specific, high-risk tasks.

Certification lasts for a year, though this timeframe could change as the scheme matures.

The assessments are done using tools originally developed by the industry and further refined by Nelson Forests. This process

This month, Fiona Ewing, National Safety Director of the Forest Industry Safety Council, begins a series of occasional articles highlighting how FISC is working to make your job safer.



of taking good work already done by companies and sharing it around the industry is a key goal for FISC.

To date I've been impressed with the willingness of companies to do this. It's clear that while they're deeply competitive when it comes to securing work, there's a huge willingness among industry players to share and work together to stop people getting hurt.

Currently, nine companies and nearly 400 workers have completed, are undertaking, or are about to undertake the certification process. A number of workers achieved certification before Safetree took over running the scheme this year and these workers will get their Safetree certificates next time they are certified.

The number of people seeking certification is expected to grow over time and FISC is currently building up the infrastructure needed to expand capacity while maintaining the quality of the assessments.

The assessments – done by trained, independent assessors – complement existing training. They are a useful way to confirm and maintain the competency of workers, particularly those trained some time ago.

At the moment certification covers the high risk tasks of tree falling, head breaker out and breaker outs. Soon, workers involved in thinning-to-waste will also be included.

In time, the register FISC runs of those certified will become searchable, providing a useful resource to the industry.

The assessments test workers' understanding of safe ways of working, including their knowledge of common risks and how to deal with them. Also tested is their understanding of things like emergency procedures, PPE and requirements in the Approved Code of Practice or relevant Best Practice Guidelines.

The assessments can be completed in writing or verbally to overcome any literacy issues. They also include practical observations of how the work gets done.

Free tools to help workers prepare for the assessments are available at www.safetree.nz (see links on next page).

Improving the competency of forestry workers – particularly those doing dangerous jobs like falling and breaking out – was a main recommendation of the 2014 Independent Forestry Review.

The Review, prompted by the deaths of 10 forestry workers in 2013, highlighted that a lack of regulation meant there were few barriers to working in forestry. No formal evidence of competency is required before people undertake often dangerous work. As a result, there is little to stop inexperienced workers being deployed on tasks well beyond their level of competency. This is despite a properly trained workforce being a crucial defence against accidents.

The Review went on to recommend that mandatory competency standards be developed for safety critical forestry roles, along with a system for independently assessing (and periodically reassessing) competency.

It's great to have the Safetree Professional Forest Worker



Qualified forestry workers will gain certificates like this in various tasks, including tree falling and breaking out.

scheme up and running. I'd encourage all forest owners, managers, contractors and workers to find out more about how they can benefit from it.

For workers like Wayde, it provides formal recognition of the professionalism and skills they bring to the job each day. For companies like Wenita Forest Products and Shane Griffin Logging it will help them run safer and more successful businesses.

Find out more

To find out more about what's involved in achieving Safetree Professional Forest Worker certification take a look at the training tools on Safetree. If you like what you see and want to get involved contact: enquiries@fisc.org.nz or info@safetree.nz.

Training Tools for Safetree Professional Forest Worker certification

- Tree Faller: http://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Safetree_TF_Competyency_Assess.pdf
- Breaker Out: http://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Safetree_BO_Competyency_Assess.pdf
- Head Breaker Out: http://safetree.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Safetree_HBO_Competyency_Assess.pdf

About Safetree and FISC

www.safetree.nz is a one-stop online shop providing free health



Wayde Lindsay, the first to receive a Safetree Professional Tree Faller certificate, presented by Forestry Minister, Jo Goodhew.

and safety resources for people working in forestry. It is run by FISC, a partnership involving government, industry and worker representatives. Improving worker competency is one of several priority projects for FISC. See more at www.fisc.org.nz.

