

## Switzerland Country Report

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## *Subject area 1: Management*

### **Safety management system**

Based on the Swiss Law on Accident Insurance, since 1 January 2000, employers have been required to comply with new, extensive rules relating to health and safety at work for their employees.

In response to this, a safety management system (“solution for the forestry industry”) has been developed by the Swiss Forestry Association (**Waldwirtschaft** Verband Schweiz, WVS) together with the Association of Swiss Forestry Entrepreneurs (Verband der Schweizerischen Forstunternehmer, VSFU).

Since then, over 1200 private and public forestry businesses have joined the “solution for the forestry industry” safety management system by means of an agreement. In this way, about 90 percent cover has been achieved. The effects are visible, and the numbers of accidents has already dropped by a quarter.

#### **Its central points are:**

Forestry enterprises must carry out a risk analysis and draw up a safety plan. This safety plan should specify responsibilities and procedures covering health and safety at work. The implementation will be monitored using random testing by independent auditors, and by insurance companies.

#### **TOP safety plan**

##### **Its central points are:**

Encompasses the areas:

- determining hazards and risk analysis
- **T** Technical (measures in the technical sector)
- **O** Organisation (measures in the organisational sector)
- **P** Persons (measures for personnel)

Determination of hazards and risk analysis:

- Checklists
- Safety inspections
- Accident investigations
- Risk analysis (central evaluation)

Technical:

- Working and<sup>1</sup> operational resources
- Inventory
- Operating instructions
- Procurement (declaration of conformity)
- Maintenance
- Personal safety equipment

Organisation:

- Safety goals
- Tasks, competencies, responsibilities
- Working conditions
- Work procedures
- Work planning
- First aid, emergency organisation

Persons:

- Leadership, care, promotion
- Basic and further training

Experience until now with the “solution for the forestry industry” has been very positive, and the scheme has contributed considerably to reducing the numbers of accidents in the Swiss forest industry. This can be seen in particular when the situation is examined in detail: professional forest businesses and entrepreneurs have succeeded in considerably reducing their accident figures, whereas amongst non-professionals (who are not included in the “solution for the forestry industry”) the number of accidents increased during the observation period.

Hp. Egloff, WVS

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*Subject area : Technology*

## ***Current state of forestry technology / timber harvest in Switzerland***

Having dealt with the consequences of Storm Lothar, the situation is as follows:

Only a few timber yards are available with wet storage or storage on plastic sheeting. Overall, bark beetle affects only a small amount of timber, and is therefore a localised problem. The many small, communal forestry companies exercise restraint in felling and are primarily concerned with employing their own staff to the full.

As a consequence, procedures that combine motorised and manual techniques are being used where fully mechanised techniques would actually be possible. Forestry companies are correspondingly suffering in terms of orders. Some firms have already been closed down. The timber industry's major organisations for procurement and felling are exploiting the situation to find new partners.

Management of Lothar has confirmed the significance of logistics in the flow of timber from the forest to the timber works, and has also revealed the existing deficits. Concrete efforts are in progress to develop new organisational forms for timber production, but so far only in a few places. In addition, as a follow-up to managing the effects of the storm, the sale of standing timber and the use of tracked harvesters have also become better established.

Oliver Thees, WSL, August 2002

## *Subject area 3: Training*

### ***Work Safety in Private Forests***

In 1996, the Swiss Forest Agency in SAEFL (Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape) organised an international seminar entitled "Safety and Health in Forestry are feasible" which was held in Konolfingen in the canton of Berne. At the seminar, work-safety and health specialists from Europe and further afield presented various proposals as to how work safety and health protection can be improved in private forests. One of the conclusions reached at the seminar was that the information and training on work safety made available to private forest owners is inadequate and needs to be improved.

Thanks to a package of measures entitled "Forest safety is feasible", the incidence of accidents in Switzerland among forestry professionals was reduced by 30% in the period between 1991 and 1999. However, the majority of the managers of farm and private forests were not covered by these measures. The "Profi (professional) in your own forest" campaign, which was initiated in the year 2000 independently of the events surrounding hurricane Lothar, was an initial step towards improving the situation with respect to accidents in farm and private forests. The relatively large number of fatal accidents that occurred in farm and private forests during the clean-up operation in the aftermath of hurricane Lothar was also a trigger for the Resolution of the Federal Council (Swiss government) of 16.02.2000. Under this resolution, DETEC (Swiss Department of the Environment Transport, Energy and Communication) was commissioned to establish whether additional work safety regulations are needed for forestry work. A working group was set up which compiled an expert report. The analysis of the accidents that occurred during the Lothar clean-up operation revealed that an alarmingly high number of these accidents had occurred in private forests. In its report, the Working Group proposed a package of measures for adoption by the Federal Council to improve the accident rate in farm and private forests. The package of measures was passed by Federal Council with a few minor changes in a Resolution of 20 February 2002. SAEFL was commissioned to carry out the following measures:

It is planned to improve the integration of work safety aspects in the Law on Forests. A provision will be added to the Law on Forests whereby logging and forestry tasks involving the use of chain saws for payment or other private-sector purposes may only be carried out if the person doing the work can provide proof of the relevant training or experience. Similar provisions have already been included in the cantonal forest legislation in some cantons.

Similarly, in the future, the Swiss Federation shall only provide financial aid and subsidies (state support measures) if recipients can prove that work in their forests is carried out in a professional and expert manner that fully complies with the relevant safety requirements.

The problem is not only being approached from the legislative perspective. The information made available to managers of farm and private forest about the dangers involved in logging and the harvesting of fallen timber, in particular, is to be improved. These individuals must be made aware of the dangers involved in logging and harvesting so that they can assess the potential risks and decide to seek a minimum level of training or have the work carried out by a professional. The raising of awareness among the relevant parties and private forest owners is to be promoted through a number of channels: e.g. information campaigns.

The provision of courses leading to a minimum level of training are to be optimised and uniform guidelines are to be defined with respect to this minimum level of training.

Furthermore, data about private forest owners in Switzerland and their behaviour with respect to their forests is to be collected by means of a written survey. The Swiss Forest Agency is also to develop a crisis management strategy with a focus on work safety issues so that the reaction to the next incidence of forest damage will be a rapid and informed one.

Swiss Forest Agency, Berne, 12.06.02, Martin Ammann