



# HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS – CORE INTEGRAL OF FSC STANDARDS



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Forests provide a range of job opportunities for managers and workers, e.g. related to forest management and protection, to harvesting of trees and other forest products, even related to certification. While timber logging is the highest-value commercial forest activity, logging activities are among the most dangerous workplaces worldwide.

The FSC standards include Health and Safety (H&S) requirements as important indicators of sustainable forest management. H&S requirements are informed with international instruments that include ILO Standards, Codes of Practice, and national legislations. According to ILO's 2019 Report for the Meeting on 'Promoting Decent Work and Safety and Health in Forestry', Forestry has high accidental rates with notable differences between and within regions. Some European countries report that one in eight forestry workers suffer an accident every year, others report less than one in 200 workers / year. Differences in the number of accidents may arise from inconsistent methods of collecting and reporting data. In addition, it is likely that accidents rates would be higher if reported figures included nonprofessional and illegal operations.



## How do FSC Standards address H&S?

- FSC H&S requirements meet or exceed the recommendations of ILO's 'Code of Practice on H&S in Forestry Work'.
- They apply to all employed persons in certified operations, including male and female, seasonal and permanent employees, contractors, self-employed contractors etc.
- Regular on-site and office audits and consultations with forest workers as part of the certification process ensure that stakeholders are informed about these FSC requirements.
- Workers receive regular trainings on H&S practices.
- Workers use protective equipment appropriate to their assigned tasks; use of this equipment is enforced.
- Employers keep records on H&S practices including accident rates and time loss.
- The H&S practices are reviewed and revised as required after major incidents or accidents.

## Research findings



FSC certification has led to improvement of H&S legislation in some countries, including the provision of better equipment and training, use of safety procedures, and the reliance on properly qualified forest workers. In some cases, public safety has also improved through implementation of risk assessments and better signage of work zones. Several studies show that overall, FSC has proven to be a powerful tool for improving H&S while strengthening workers' rights and working conditions as required in FSC Principle 2.

- E.g. in Romania, Hălălișan et al. (2022) analysed CARs and find that FSC certification, especially for forestry operations, is an enabling factor for identifying, describing, and reducing H&S issues in Romanian forestry.
- E.g. in Guatemala, "prior to certification, forest workers often had inadequate footwear, clothing and protective headgear, and often had no access to first aid equipment or first aid training. Many work camps were makeshift with combined eating and sleeping areas, and sometimes no separate latrine. After certification, adequate safety and first aid equipment was made available to workers. Work camp layouts were restructured, and latrines built". "The principal positive impacts brought about by certification include: (...) improvements in safety aspects and general well-being of forest workers."
- For other case studies please visit the FSC website or contact [m.karmann@fsc.org](mailto:m.karmann@fsc.org)

## Conclusions

The ILO Convention 155 and ILO Convention 187 were upgraded to "Fundamental Conventions". ILO Conventions 155 calls for procedures for recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases, and workers representation in H&S structures.

ILO Convention 187 provides for greater opportunity to enhance a H&S culture in which the right to a safe and healthy environment is respected and anchored on a widely publicized OHS national program. With the integration of these two ILO conventions there is need for FSC to review and identify gaps which can further be applied to improve on FSC's H&S requirements in certification processes.

We congratulate FSC for protecting workers rights and contributing to SDG's Goal 8 on sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. We call upon FSC members, people working in forestry and its value chains, unions, researchers and consumers to engage to further strengthen and promote safe and secure working environments for all.

