



“P.P.M.”—PERSONAL PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Reviewed May 12, 2004

Just as preventive maintenance can lengthen the life of a skidder, feller-buncher, or any other machine, personal preventive maintenance can improve the quality of the forest worker's life. Timber harvesting is physically and mentally demanding. Logging workers must be fit. Logging employers value responsible, productive, and safety-conscientious individuals. They also recognize the importance of employee health or "wellness."

Contractors can seek advice and information from many sources, such as their own physicians, dietitians, physical fitness trainers, nurses, their health insurance company, and hospitals. Wellness programs that improve workers' physical and mental health can improve their ability to handle the everyday stresses associated with their job and home lives. To be successful, these programs may require life-style changes. Some ideas to encourage these changes are:

1. **Use a paycheck "envelope stuffer"** to promote a wellness related topic such as exercise, stopping smoking, nutrition, healthful cooking recipes, disease control, weight reduction, and other topics.
2. **Encourage employees to have annual physicals** or health screenings.
3. **Have employee discussion on specified wellness topics** such as:
 - a. Heart disease and its prevention
 - b. Weight control
 - c. Stop smoking
 - d. Diabetes and its control
 - e. Mental relaxation techniques
 - f. Exercising—weight training and aerobics
 - g. Healthy eating habits
 - h. Back safety
4. **Promote wellness programs** with employees' families.
5. **Arrange for a health professional to attend an employee safety meeting** to present a wellness topic.
6. **Implement an on-the-job stretching** program for workers.
 - a. Require workers to loosen up and stretch before beginning their jobs.
 - b. Allow equipment operators to stop and "stretch" routinely to relax their muscles.
7. **Encourage chain saw and equipment operators to wear back support belts.**
8. **Voluntarily provide to employees information about drug and alcohol abuse assistance.**
9. **And Most Importantly: Lead by example.**