

FORESTRY COMPANIES PICK UP SAFE START MESSAGE

As forestry companies increasingly pick up the start safe message, more “Safe Start” breakfasts are being held than ever before. PF Olsen, Matariki Forests, Timberlands, Ernslaw One, City Forests and Wenita Forest Products held the Safe Start breakfasts in conjunction with ACC, with most companies adding at least one new area to their breakfast schedule.

These breakfasts renew a workers’ focus on health and safety at the beginning of their very first day back on the job. In some areas, the breakfasts attracted up to 400 crew members.

“The breakfasts are a chance to remind workers of the hazards of the job and the need to act safely 100% of the time,” says ACC’s forestry injury prevention programme manager Don Ramsay. “People who are fresh back from holiday are usually out of condition and their minds are still on holiday. That’s when injuries can happen.”

This was best summed up by Rayonier’s General Manager Keith Davidson, who travelled to the South Island to attend as many of Rayonier’s breakfasts as he could.

At each breakfast, Mr Davidson told of a very unfortunate incident where a few years ago one of their contracted tree fellers was killed on his first day back at work. During the investigation it became clear the feller’s mind was not on the job that day. His cuts were poorly made and the trees didn’t fall where they should have. Mr Davidson said the company decided to do everything it could to prevent this happening again. That included putting health and safety at the top of its workers’ minds as soon as they started back.

“Each year, companies are putting on more breakfasts to remind their workers to keep safe.” Don Ramsay said.

“And it’s clearly working. Overall, forestry injury claims to ACC drop during January when we would expect them to rise with people just back from holiday. In fact, some of the lowest ever injury numbers have been recorded in the months of January. It’s great to see the companies putting such an effort into health and safety.”