

## The Positive Side of Training During Covid

The discussion on the current pandemic and how it's impacting our global world, and our personal worlds, is expansive. Workspaces have changed and we have all had to adapt. What's surprising, or maybe not, is the increase in activity in the construction industry and, at the Island School of Building Arts on Gabriola, the continued strong demand for training in both Log building and Timber framing.

Country-wide restrictions resulted in the cancellation of all Spring 2020 programs at ISBA, with both domestic and international students choosing to either move to another session or to wait until travel limitations are removed. Fortunately, the school was able to go forward with the Fall session and, for the first time in 24 years, with a full roster of Canadian students. Going past the typical jokes about everyone being so polite and saying 'sorry' as they pass by each other in the shop, one great outcome of this Fall 2020 Big Wood session is that we are truly able to see how interested and enthusiastic Canadians continue to be about learning the skills and craft of working with big timbers.

Covid protocols are in place in the classroom and in the shop. A detailed Covid Safety Plan is in place and every student was required to agree to follow all directions, no matter their personal opinion on the matter. This plan and their cooperation is what allowed ISBA to deliver training this Fall in a safe and respectful manner. Masks are worn in the classroom, sanitizing hands and tools is a regular activity and students have worked to make their classmates and instructors their primary bubble. The SketchUp for Timber Framers computer design workshops were limited in size but so popular that the school added more courses to meet the demand.

In all three Big Wood courses: Log Building, Timber Frame Post and Beam and Timber Frame Hammer Bents, there was only one seat in one course that was not taken. The end result is a crop of graduates who are excited about adding Log and Timber skills to their toolboxes, whether it's with the end goal of working in industry, building their own structures or designing for clients.

This is great news for our industry and we know that our Log and Timber Frame graduates will take their skills out into the world. Working with Big Wood is an honourable tradition and we invite Log and Timber Frame companies to get in touch, or stay in touch, with ISBA and we will connect you to our graduates - and your potential employees.

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