

FORESTER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

FOREST PROFESSIONAL REGULATORS OF CANADA



FOREST PROFESSIONAL
REGULATORS
OF CANADA

ORGANISME DE
RÉGLEMENTATION
DES PROFESSIONNELS
DE LA FORÊT DU CANADA



Adopted MMM YYYY



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Organisme de réglementation des professionnels
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ORGANISME DE
RÉGLEMENTATION
DES PROFESSIONNELS
de
LA FORÊT DU
CANADA

04

About FRPC/ORPFC

05

Glossary

06

Introduction

08

Structure

09

Purpose & Guiding Principles

10

Standards

19

Appendix: Bloom's Taxonomy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Forest Professional Regulators of Canada

The Forest Professional Regulators of Canada / Organisme de réglementation des professionnels de la forêt du Canada (FPRC/ORPFC) is an advisory group composed of representatives of forest **professional regulatory organizations** across Canada. The Canadian Institute of Forestry participates as an observer, representing those jurisdictions in which forestry is not a regulated profession.

FPRC/ORPFC's mission is to provide coordination of programs and services, enabling transparent, impartial, and procedurally fair registration practices of forest professionals by regulators in Canada.

FPRC/ORPFC's purposes are to:

- promote consistency in the regulation of forest professionals in Canada,
- coordinate and communicate issues that affect the regulation of forest professionals,
- enable movement for forest professionals between jurisdictions,
- define **professional practice standards** for **entry-to-practice** and **entry-level independent practice**, oversee the accreditation of post-secondary forestry programs, and conduct credential assessments.

FPRC/ORPFC sets national professional practice standards for registration to practice as a forestry professional in Canada.

Forest Professional Regulatory Organizations In Canada

These regulators are legislated provincially to regulate foresters in Canada:



Glossary

Throughout this document, words and terms are used that have specific meanings. It is important to know, at the outset, the definitions in the context of these standards.

Note: Terms identified in the glossary are **bolded** in their first occurrence in the document

Accreditation: The formal, independent evaluation of a post-secondary program to determine whether it meets the educational standards required for graduates to be eligible for professional registration or licensure.

Allied science education: Programs that are delivered through recognized academic institutions which cover principal areas of practice in the natural, physical, and social sciences, but are not accredited by the Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board.

Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board (CFAB): CFAB conducts post-secondary forestry program accreditation reviews on behalf of FPRC to ensure the programs align with the competencies required for entry-to-practice as a regulated forestry professional in Canada.

Competency: A comprehensive statement of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that entry-level independent practice foresters are able to demonstrate. Each competency must be considered in the context of both the competency area and the standard in which it is located.

Competency area: A grouping of related competencies within a standard.

Entry-level independent practice: The stage at which an individual has met all professional competencies and is granted the full title to practise independently, with full accountability for professional standards and ethics.

Entry-to-practice: The stage at which an individual begins their career in a regulated profession, through an in-training or provisional registration category. Entry-to-practice marks the transition from academic preparation to supervised or mentored practice, during which the individual is expected to develop and demonstrate the required competencies for independent professional practice and designation.

Professional practice: The conduct and work of someone registered in a particular profession.

Professional practice standards: The complete, authoritative set of standards that define the expectations for entry-level independent practice in a given profession.

Professional regulatory organization: (also known as regulator) An organization with the legislated authority to exercise autonomous authority over a defined area of professional practice in a regulatory capacity.

Standard: A thematic grouping of related competency areas.

Introduction

Professional practice standards are an authoritative document that sets out the legal and professional basis of the practice of the profession and contributes to public protection by informing the public and foresters of their accountabilities. These professional practice standards provide an overall framework for determining the competencies for registration as a forestry professional and describe, in broad terms, the entry-level independent practice expectations of foresters, regardless of area of practice.

The Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board (CFAB) was formed in 1990. The first set of written standards for Canadian university forestry programs were established in 1994. Since then, the standards have been refined and updated at periodic intervals to reflect changes in the profession and forestry best practices. These standards represent the latest iteration.

The professional practice standards provide the framework for forestry practice in Canada by:

- describing performance criteria for foresters,
- defining the scope of practice to the public and other professionals,
- providing a framework for **professional practice**, and
- providing a foundation to all aspects of the regulation of the profession, including determining the competency requirements for registration, practice standards, and professional exams.

These standards were developed with a holistic view of the work that foresters undertake while looking to the future and how the breadth of the work foresters carry out may change as societal expectations evolve.

FPRC/ORPFC recognizes that these standards are relevant at the time of adoption, and the competency areas and competencies may change in the future and will be adjusted accordingly.

Each **standard** includes a broad description, one or more competency areas, and multiple competencies articulating how the standard is demonstrated. Specific examples of measurement instruments and other tools are not mentioned in the competencies as it is recognized that different instruments and tools may be developed and implemented over time.

FPRC/ORPFC recognizes that a broad variety of user groups, First Nations and/or Indigenous groups have vested interests in the forest as an ecosystem and that a broad variety of values are identified with forest resource utilization and intrinsic attributes.

Indigenous Acknowledgement

The Forest Professional Regulators of Canada / Organisme de réglementation des professionnels de la forêt du Canada acknowledge that its member organizations and registrants work and reside in the ancestral lands and territories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Canada.

The standards incorporate the recognition of Indigenous rights¹ and titles, as well as the expectation of skills foresters must have in order to effectively respect and honour those rights and titles.

Where competencies identify Indigenous-focused competencies, a forester would be applying or incorporating information that has been provided by Indigenous peoples / communities.



¹ For more information on Indigenous Rights, see:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-indigenous-peoples.html>

Structure

All standards have equal importance and are interconnected.

The professional practice standards articulate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are required by foresters in professional practice. The standards describe what each forester is responsible and accountable for in their practice.

Each standard includes one or more competency areas. A competency area is a useful grouping of related competencies.

A competency is a comprehensive statement of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that foresters are able to demonstrate at entry-level independent practice. Each competency must be considered in the context of both the competency area and the standard in which it is located. Although presented as a unified set of standards, organized into competency

areas, the competencies themselves are the key elements.

The competencies are written using action verbs such as “recognize”, “describe”, “apply”, “analyze”, “evaluate”, or “develop” as commonly found in Bloom’s Taxonomy Revised (2001). The taxonomy classifies verbs into levels of complexity and specificity. The taxonomy has been used to articulate the required level of understanding and ability that foresters must demonstrate for each of the competencies. Refer to Appendix 1 for a fuller discussion of Bloom’s Taxonomy Revised and the list of verbs used in the competencies.

When a competency corresponds to a variety of skills / knowledge, footnotes are provided as guidance for users of the standards.





Purpose & Guiding Principles

The professional practice standards provide an overall framework for the practice of foresters. This document is intended to define the competencies for the entry-level independent practice of a forester.

It is not intended to prescribe the scope of practice of the profession.

Purposes of the Standards:

- Aid in facilitating labour mobility for regulated professions.
- Determine registration eligibility for individuals who have completed non-accredited allied science education and have work experience.
- Help individuals determine which pathway to professional registration would be best suited for them.
- Set minimum requirements for entry-level independent practice into the forester regulated profession.
- Form the academic content basis for **accreditation** decisions of post-secondary forestry programs.
- Aid in developing a better understanding and respect for the various and complementary roles that foresters have.

Guiding Principles

- There are areas of overlap in education between foresters and other regulated professions, including forest technologists.
- Competency standards are developed to ensure protection of the public interest and to support forester practice in Canada.
- Competency standards are broad in nature to capture the entry-level skills necessary to work in a variety of roles and areas of practice.
- The competency areas are interrelated; a competency used to illustrate one competency area may also demonstrate the application of other competency areas.



FOREST PROFESSIONAL
REGULATORS
OF CANADA

ORGANISME DE
RÉGLEMENTATION
DES PROFESSIONNELS
DE LA FORÊT DU CANADA

11

Standard 1:
Foundational Knowledge

12

Standard 2:
Communication & Information
Management

13

Standard 3:
Critical Reasoning & Leadership

14

Standard 4:
Professionalism & Ethics

15

Standard 5:
Forest Site Assessment

17

Standard 6:
Forest Administration

18

Standard 7:
Forest Planning

STANDARDS

Foundational Knowledge

1

Professional foresters need a breadth of knowledge to fulfill their duties as forest stewards, mandated to act in the interest of the Public. A candidate for registration as an RPF (Registered Professional Forester) or ing.f. (ingénieure forestière) must have the equivalent of a minimum four year baccalaureate degree focused on forestry (or a closely related field of study), which includes some foundational knowledge in each of the following subject areas: biological, physical, and social sciences, relevant to the practice of forestry. Foundational knowledge generally encompasses about 20% of a standard four-year undergraduate forestry or allied science forestry program.

Notes:

There are no specific competency areas or competencies specified for this standard.

Communication & Information Management

2

Professional foresters communicate the key elements of their work to interested parties, using written, visual, and oral approaches. They are effective at managing information and communicating cross-culturally.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Effective Communication

1. Acknowledge cultural differences in communication
2. Create written, visual, and oral materials for a variety of audiences
3. Communicate in a way that is effective, respectful, non-judgemental, and culturally appropriate
4. Interpret written, visual, and oral communication materials

B. Information Management

1. Explain that information comes from a variety of sources
2. Acknowledge oral histories and Indigenous knowledge ²
3. Explain that data sources have different conditions for sharing ³
4. Implement quality management processes ⁴
5. Organize and store information
6. Recognize the importance of documenting rationale for decisions

Notes:

² Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, their worldviews, knowledge, governance (including protocols for engagement), and practices related to lands and resources.

³ Includes oral history, Indigenous knowledge, and other proprietary information from a variety of sources.

⁴ Includes quality assurance and quality control to ensure accuracy of information.

Critical Reasoning & Leadership

3

Professional foresters use critical reasoning to analyze complex ideas and provide advice to address multi-faceted problems. Foresters work independently and as part of teams, consult and collaborate with others, and inspire higher standards of practice by leading themselves and others.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Critical Reasoning

1. Evaluate information and sources
2. Analyze issues
3. Recognize the need for external expertise ⁵
4. Propose solutions to complex problems
5. Prepare rationales for decisions

B. Leadership

1. Identify the need for, and seek out, appropriate resources, training, and/or coaching (A¹)
2. Identify cognitive bias (C¹)
3. Use effective interpersonal skills
4. Incorporate different tools and frameworks into decision-making ⁶ (C³)

C. Relationship Development

1. Contribute to teams
2. Identify the importance of consulting with others ⁷ (A⁴)
3. Identify the importance of Indigenous reconciliation (A⁴)
4. Apply conflict resolution strategies

Notes:

⁵ Includes appropriate interaction with other relevant occupations and professionals.

⁶ Includes, but is not limited to, consensus based decision making, autocratic, and democratic.

⁷ Includes professionals, experts, interested groups, and rights and title holders.

A¹ – Affective Domain, Level 1 Receiving

A⁴ – Affective Domain, Level 4 Organization

C¹ – Cognitive Domain, Level 1 Remember

C³ – Cognitive Domain, Level 3 Apply

Professionalism & Ethics

4

Professional foresters protect and serve the public interest by practicing with integrity, independence from external influences, and accountability. They maintain professional conduct, follow a code of ethics, continuously improve, and maintain regulatory requirements. They manage land and a variety of forest resources for today's society and for future generations.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Policy and Legislation Applicable to Regulated Forest Professionals

1. Explain the purpose, structure, and functions of professional regulatory organizations
2. Explain the importance of constitutional rights, treaty rights, and international agreements pertaining to Indigenous peoples
3. Recognize the importance of adhering to applicable occupational health and safety regulations and training requirements

B. Duties and Obligations of Professionals

1. Explain the importance of professional scopes of practice and maintaining competence within your practice
2. Demonstrate due diligence in completion of work and associated tasks
3. Differentiate between professional and unprofessional conduct

C. Public Interest

1. Describe what the public interest is and its importance in the practice of forestry
2. Differentiate between public interests and private interests⁸
3. Apply an applicable code of ethics to professional forestry decisions

Notes:

⁸ Includes personal interests and employment interests.

Forest Site Assessment

5

Professional foresters collect data and assess values to develop recommendations for the sustainable management of forests and forest systems. These data and values form the basis for silviculture systems and treatments to achieve desired objectives for the forest.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Sampling and Data Collection

1. Describe social, cultural, and physical aspects of trees, stands, and forests ⁹
2. Prepare a sampling plan
3. Implement appropriate sampling procedures
4. Apply measurement instruments correctly to obtain accurate measurements ¹⁰
5. Measure key attributes of trees and sites ¹¹
6. Describe soil types and characteristics ¹²
7. Identify key hydrological features and relevant infrastructure ¹³ (C¹)
8. Describe biotic and abiotic characteristics using keys, guidebooks, and other available tools
9. Apply standardized classification systems ¹⁴

B. Navigation and Safety in the Field

1. Plan travel routes to execute field tasks
2. Apply appropriate tools and procedures for field navigation and mapping ¹⁵
3. Operate equipment safely and effectively
4. Mitigate hazards and risks while doing field-based work

Notes:

⁹ Includes traditional ecological knowledge relative to a given region. In an urban context, includes trees and forests as part of green infrastructure.

¹⁰ For a variety of trees, forest, site, and other environmental conditions.

¹¹ Includes specialized measurements associated with species at risk.

¹² Includes the use of keys to classify forest soils.

¹³ Includes, but is not limited to, bridges, culverts, and access.

¹⁴ Includes, but is not limited to, ecosite classification, soil classification, plant identification, forest resource inventory, watershed classification, wetland classification, etc.

¹⁵ Includes, but is not limited to, field navigation tools, including Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)-enabled technologies, compasses, and maps.

Forest Site Assessment continued

Competency Area	Competencies
C. Biotic and Abiotic Risks to Forests	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify biotic and abiotic disturbances ¹⁶ (C¹) 2. Describe potential risks of disturbances to the environment, property, society and the economy 3. Apply climate change risk analysis 4. Describe risk mitigation strategies ¹⁷
D. Forest Site Conditions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpret field and remotely sensed data, imagery, and maps ¹⁸ 2. Predict expected forest and site conditions 3. Prepare forecasts of stand dynamics and forest productivity under a variety of disturbances ¹⁹ 4. Assess risk of damage from biotic, abiotic, economic, and social and cultural factors 5. Prepare prescriptions based on forest site conditions

Notes:

¹⁶ Includes, but is not limited to, pests, pathogens, invasive species, fire, flooding, wind, and land stability.

¹⁷ Includes mitigating cumulative impacts.

¹⁸ Includes statistical analyses and assessments of data limitations.

¹⁹ Includes both treatments and natural and anthropogenic disturbances.

C¹ – Cognitive Domain, Level 1 Remember

Forest Administration

6

Professional foresters collect data and assess values to develop recommendations for the sustainable management of forests and forest systems. These data and values form the basis for silviculture systems and treatments to achieve desired objectives for the forest.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Forest Uses, Forest Products, and Other Forest Values

1. Evaluate economic, cultural, and ecological/ecosystem service values ²⁰
2. Describe how domestic and global trends influence values
3. Assess the implications of extractive and non-extractive uses on values
4. Assess treatment costs, non-monetary values, and return on investments ²¹
5. Recommend strategies to enhance values over time

B. Legislation and Policies

1. Describe the social, political, cultural, and economic factors that influence legislation and policies
2. Explain legislation and policy mandates at local, provincial, and federal levels and intersections with Indigenous land claims, rights, and treaties
3. Describe policy differences among various tenure and land use designations
4. Identify relevant legislation and policies for specific resource management decisions (C¹)
5. Recognize Indigenous consultation requirements ²²
6. Describe the influence of forest certification schemes on decision making ²³

C. Project Management

1. Develop project plans ²⁴
2. Develop project risk mitigation strategies
3. Implement project plans

Notes:

²⁰ Includes, but is not limited to the following values: timber (including value-added products), habitat, wetlands, fishery, recreational, aesthetics, spiritual, genetic, growth potential. Includes recognizing the factors that affect these values.

²¹ Costs include, but are not limited to, harvest systems, harvesting access and development equipment and materials. wildland firefighting equipment and resources, silvicultural equipment, and biological materials such as trees, seeds and plants.

²² Includes the principles of the duty to consult and accommodate, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).

²³ There are three internationally recognized forest certification organizations used in Canada: The Canadian Standards Association (CSA), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). These organizations deliver forest certification systems based on standards that provide a framework for ensuring sustainable forest management practices, including environmental, social, and economic considerations.

²⁴ Includes objectives, tasks, timelines, budget, workforce, and other resources.

C¹ – Cognitive Domain, Level 1 Remember

Forest Planning

7

Professional foresters are responsible for developing and interpreting plans across forested landscapes over varying timeframes. Plans range from broad scale to local scale, and from long-term to short-term.

Competency Area

Competencies

A. Forest Plan Development

1. Describe the planning process and its components
2. Apply legal and policy requirements for planning
3. Incorporate ecological, social, and economic values in forest plans (A⁵)
4. Apply concepts of sustainability
5. Apply landscape and stand-level projection models ²⁵
6. Recommend reclamation and rehabilitation activities following disturbances
7. Explain how public consultation influences planning ²⁶
8. Identify potential for adverse impacts on the continuous exercise of Indigenous rights and usage (A⁴)
9. Describe a monitoring process for continuous improvement of plans
10. Prepare a forest plan ²⁷

B. Operational Forest Plan Development

1. Develop operational plan objectives
2. Integrate public input
3. Develop strategies to identify, maintain, or protect cultural and archeological values
4. Assess required access and operational methods
5. Describe forest regeneration requirements ²⁸
6. Incorporate safety requirements (A⁵)
7. Evaluate constraints, required information, equipment, materials, and human resources
8. Develop a monitoring plan
9. Prepare an operational plan

Notes:

²⁵ Includes, but is not limited to, integration of climate change risk, cumulative impacts, and biotic and abiotic disturbances.

²⁶ This includes consultation with Indigenous peoples. In an urban setting, this includes multicultural values.

²⁷ To demonstrate competency in integrating key planning factors into a forest plan. May be limited to a small geographic area.

²⁸ This may include individual tree planting or planting in small groups, natural regeneration and tree improvement considerations.

A⁴ – Affective Domain, Level 4 Organization

A⁵ – Affective Domain, Level 5 Characterization

Appendix 1: Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's taxonomy is a useful framework for conveying levels of competency.

The Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo (Waterloo, 2025a) provides a helpful background on Bloom's Taxonomy, describing both the original (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, and Krathwohl, 1956) and revised (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) versions. That said, there is no set standard as there are many different adaptations of the taxonomy, departing from these foundational versions.

The forester standards use the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy Revised (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), as presented in Waterloo (2025b), with minor adaptations captured here.

According to Waterloo (2025a), Bloom's Taxonomy Revised includes three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor:

- The cognitive domain captures the intellectual skills and abilities required for learning, thinking critically and problem solving.
- The affective domain captures the emotional response concerning one's attitudes, values and appreciation for motivation in learning.
- The psychomotor domain captures the ability to use motor skills that includes physical movement, reflex and coordination to develop techniques in excretion, in accuracy and time.

Given the nature of a forester's work, most competencies relate to the cognitive domain, using verbs therein. Although used sporadically, competencies related to the affective and psychomotor domains still play a crucial role in contributing to a well-rounded professional, so these domains are also referenced.

Only those verbs used in the standards are listed in the tables below. The number of verbs used

within each level has been limited for clarity and consistency; a short list of related verbs within each level allows for nuance in application to the competencies. Occasionally, Waterloo (2025b), and this adaptation, include the same verb in multiple domains and/or levels. Where such a term appears in the standards, its domain/level has been clarified with an alpha-numeric footnote (e.g. C1 – Cognitive Domain, Level 1 Understand). In the tables below, these repeated verbs are identified with the caret/circumflex symbol (^). Also, the standards infrequently use a verb which was not present in the Waterloo (2025b). These verbs were chosen due to their relevance to forestry practice and were placed within the domain and level of understanding desired by the related competency. In the tables below these additions have been marked with an asterisk (*). Rarely, the level conveyed by a verb found in Waterloo (2025b) was adjusted in application to the standards. In the tables below, adjustments of this kind have been noted with a plus/minus symbol (\pm).

Critical to any interpretation of Bloom's Taxonomy is an understanding of the hierarchical nature of the levels within each domain. Each level subsumes the preceding levels. For example, in the cognitive domain, one first needs to "remember" and "understand", prior to being able to "apply".

Tables presenting the three domains and the hierarchical levels within each domain follow. The hierarchy increases from left to right. The primary verb which epitomizes each level within the hierarchy is presented in underline. A description of the level follows directly underneath, in italics. Below, each level of the list of verbs used in the standards is presented.

Cognitive Domain

Cognitive domain: intellectual skills and abilities required for learning, thinking critically and problem solving.

C1 Remember	C2 Understand	C3 Apply	C4 Analyze	C5 Evaluate	C6 Create
<i>Retain, recall and recognize knowledge</i>	<i>Translate and interpret knowledge</i>	<i>Apply knowledge to different situations</i>	<i>Break down information to look at relationships</i>	<i>Make judgments based on evidence found</i>	<i>Compile information to generate new solutions</i>
Identify [^] Recognize	Describe Explain Interpret Predict	Apply Demonstrate Implement Incorporate ^{^*} Use	Analyze Differentiate Organize	Assess Evaluate Measure Recommend	Create Develop Mitigate* Plan Prepare Propose

[^] This verb also appears in other domains/levels. Each appearance in the standards is clarified by way of footnote therein.

* This verb is not present in Waterloo (2025b) but was added in developing the standards.

Affective Domain

Affective domain: emotional response concerning one's attitudes, values and appreciation for motivation in learning.

A1 Receiving	A2 Responding	A3 Valuing	A4 Organization	A5 Characterization
<i>Being willing to listen and be aware to receive knowledge</i>	<i>Actively participating and engaging to transfer knowledge</i>	<i>Finds value and worth in one's learning and is motivated to continue</i>	<i>Integrating and comparing values, ordering them according to priorities</i>	<i>Value that will control the outcome and behaviour</i>
Acknowledge Identify [^]	Communicate Contribute	[None]	Identify [^] Integrate	Incorporate [^]

[^] This verb also appears in other domains/levels. Each appearance in the standards is clarified by way of footnote therein.

Psychomotor Domain

Psychomotor Domain: ability to use motor skills that includes physical movement, reflex and coordination to develop techniques in execution, in accuracy and time.

P1 Set	P2 Guided Response	P3 Mechanism	P4 Complex Overt Response	P5 Adaptation	P6 Origination
<i>How ready one is to act (physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually)</i>	<i>Beginner level, learns through trial and error by practicing</i>	<i>Intermediate level, develops proficiency and action becomes habitual</i>	<i>Expert level, high proficiency and performs with accuracy</i>	<i>Skills strongly developed and can be modified in different situations</i>	<i>Create new procedures and solutions to approach various situations</i>
[None]	Follow	Displays Operate±	[None]	[None]	[None]

± The verb “operate” was adjusted from 'P4 Complex Overt Response' to 'P3 Mechanism' in adapting the standards from Waterloo (2025b).

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