



## **Continuing Competency Program: Element Three**

# **Mandatory Practice Reviews: Detailed Procedures**

**May 2008**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

In 2002, the council of the Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals (ABCFP or association) set in motion the process to develop a program to help the association enhance the competency of its members and created a framework to help members ensure their continuing competency in their area(s) of practice. The result of this process was a three-element Continuing Competency Program including:

- Self-Assessments (mandatory for all members), launched officially in 2005.
- Voluntary Peer Reviews, launched officially in late 2006.
- Practice Reviews (mandatory for all registered members who haven't completed a Voluntary Peer Review within the last five years, chosen by random selection), program development in 2007 and launching a pilot program in 2008 with the program increasing in scope in subsequent years.

### **1.2 Governing Authority**

The continuing competency program is developed under the authority of the *Foresters Act* (June 20, 2003) and the ABCFP's Bylaws. Under the *Foresters Act* and Bylaws, (which include the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice,) members of the ABCFP are obligated to maintain their competency in their area(s) of practice and the association is tasked with ensuring the competence of its members.

Specifically, *Foresters Act* Sections 4(2) and 9(1) and ABCFP Bylaws 12.2, 13.1 and 13.2 are relevant to the authority of the Association to conduct Practice Reviews (see Appendix A).

### **1.3 Defining Practice Review**

The Practice Review process builds upon the first two elements of the continuing competency process (Self-Assessment and Voluntary Peer Review).

The purpose of a Practice Review is to demonstrate, through an independent and objective process, the competency and due diligence practices of members, and secondarily, the effectiveness of the Self-Assessment and Voluntary Peer Review

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mechanisms. (The Voluntary Peer Review process assesses a member's independence, professional conduct and integrity.) It is meant to be a proactive, confidential, constructive and educational process which may result in direction being given to members to address deficiencies in a timely manner. This process is not tied to the discipline process nor meant to be punitive. Practice Reviews carried out as a remedial action of the discipline process are not connected or related to the Practice Review element of the Continuing Competency Program and will not form part of the random sample for Mandatory Practice Reviews.

A Practice Review is an ABCFP-led evaluation of a member's practice in relation to a set of core requirements identified as essential for the practice of professional forestry (see definition in Appendix B). These requirements are applicable regardless of the setting or area of professional forestry practice. They include assessment in areas such as:

- Continuing competency;
- Scope of practice;
- Continuing education (CE) records;
- Maintenance of records;
- Quality assurance; and
- Access to resources.

Registered members are encouraged to enquire about and request a Practice Review for self-improvement.

## **1.4 Objectives**

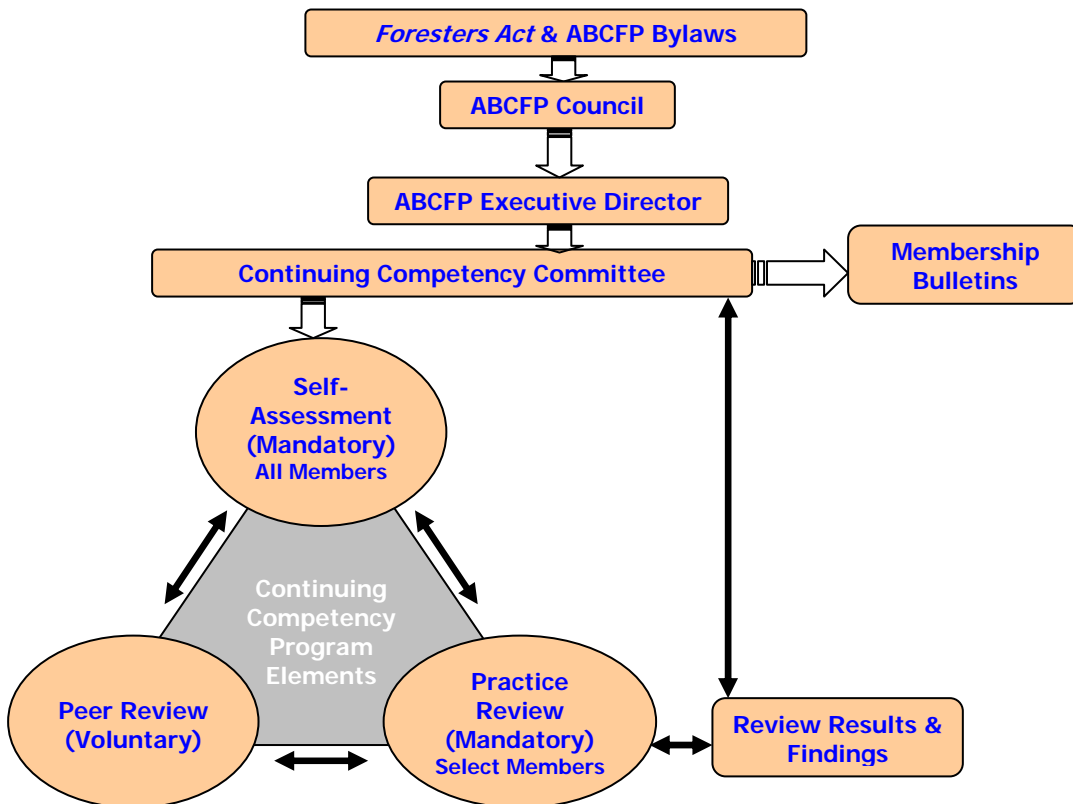
The Practice Review is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide constructive feedback for improving a member's professional practice.
- To provide the ABCFP with a mechanism to assess member competency.
- To independently review member's professional development.
- To validate Self-Assessments (and Voluntary Peer Reviews for registered members who volunteer for a Practice Review) and to fill any competency gaps.
- To increase the level of the public's confidence in the profession of forestry.
- To provide direction to members based on general feedback from completed Practice Reviews (refer to section 6.1); and
- To provide the public with general feedback with confidential information removed from completed Practice Reviews.

## 2. Continuing Competency Program

### 2.1 Overview

The ABCFP's executive director established a professional practice committee (PPC) to develop the three elements of the Continuing Competency Program. The Voluntary Peer Review builds upon the Self-Assessment foundation. The Practice Review is mandatory and will also draw upon the mandatory Self-Assessment and, if available, the Voluntary Peer Review. Once all three phases of the Continuing Competency Program are in place, the executive director will establish a continuing competency committee (CCC) to help adjudicate mandatory Practice Reviews and continually improve all elements of the Continuing Competency Program. The CCC will share the general findings or themes of the Practice Reviews with members so everyone can benefit from the knowledge gained during the reviews.



### **3. Practice Review**

A credible Practice Review program requires several key components. The following sections provide details for each component. Membership feedback relating to these details is critical to the success of the Practice Review program.

- Section 3.1: Continuing Competency Committee
- Section 3.2: Reviewee Selection
- Section 3.3: Reviewer Selection
- Section 3.4: Practice Review Scope
- Section 4: Practice Review Process

#### **3.1 Continuing Competency Committee**

The CCC will be established by the executive director in 2008 and will have the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain and continually improve the Self-Assessment and Voluntary Peer Review elements.
2. Set, maintain and continually improve standards and procedures for the Mandatory Practice Review element.
3. Adjudicate member Practice Reviews requiring corrective measures.

##### **3.1.1 Staff Coordination**

The Practice Review element is overseen by the CCC. Staff members will work under the direction of the CCC to undertake the daily operation of the reviews and will coordinate five Practice Reviews during 2008 (pilot implementation). In 2009, the number of Practice Reviews will increase (refer to section 3.2.2). Staff will have the following job responsibilities:

1. staff liaison support for the CCC;
2. determine and oversee the random selection process of Practice Review candidates;
3. coordinate the Practice Review selection notice process;

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4. determine and oversee the training, qualification and selection of reviewers;
5. determine and continually improve the scope and content of Practice Reviews;
6. oversee the maintenance of Continuing Competency Program records, document control, dispute resolution and quality assurance aspects;
7. follow up on Practice Reviews requiring remedial action;
8. administrate the Practice Review appeal process;
9. receive member feedback and continually improve the Self-Assessment, Voluntary Peer Review and Practice Review elements; and
10. summarize Practice Review findings and provide direction to members and the public (bulletins) based on general feedback from completed Practice Reviews.

## **3.2 Reviewee Selection**

### **3.2.1 Members Eligible for Practice Review**

According to the *Foresters Act* Section 13, there are six classes of membership in the association:

1. Registered members: Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and Registered Forest Technologists (RFT).
2. Enrolled members: Foresters-in-Training (FIT), Forestry Pupils (FP) and Trainee Forest Technologists (TFT).
3. Retired members: Retired Members and Life Members.
4. Holders of special permits: Special Permits for Visiting Professional Foresters. Special Permits for Transferring Professional Foresters and Limited Licenses.
5. Associate members.
6. Honorary members.

Registered members shall be subject to Practice Reviews. In addition, Special Permits for Transferring Professional Foresters and Limited Licenses granted with a permit term of three years or more shall be subject to Practice Reviews.

### **3.2.2 Sample Size and Selection Process**

Participation in the Practice Review random selection process is mandatory for all members eligible for a Practice Review. As participating in a Practice Review is a professional responsibility, reviewees will not be compensated for their time during the

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review process. A database tracking all member candidates (names drawn randomly), those actually chosen (net of exemptions), and those deferred for Practice Reviews will be established and maintained by staff. Members may also request a Practice Review and eligible members may also be chosen for a Practice Review at the association's discretion. (These names will be part of the annual sample.)

The objective of the Practice Review element is to randomly audit a certain number of eligible members each year in a cost-effective manner rather than having each member receive a Practice Review at least once in a certain timeframe. Over the next few years, the ABCFP will increase the number of annual Practice Reviews, beginning with a pilot program of five reviews in 2008. The number of Practice Reviews completed each year will be continually monitored and adjusted based upon the number of Voluntary Peer Reviews completed, findings from previous year's reviews and budget constraints. It is expected that not more than 2.5% of the members will need to have a Practice Review in any one year.

### **3.2.3 Selection List Exemptions**

Staff will be responsible for determining the required number of reviewees from the eligible membership database each year. For transparency purposes, there will be two scrutineers present during the selection of reviewees.

Consideration needs to be given to which eligible members will be exempt from a Practice Review each year. Exemption due to recent completion of a Voluntary Peer Review is discussed in the following paragraphs and outlined in the ABCFP Voluntary Peer Review Guide:

*“Registered members... who have participated in a Voluntary Peer Review, as the person being reviewed will be exempt from being chosen for a Practice Review for a period of 5 years.”*

This means that if a member carries out a Voluntary Peer Review every five years, he or she can continually be exempt from being chosen for a Practice Review.

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The ABCFP fiscal year (December 1 to November 30) shall be used to determine member exemptions from Practice Reviews when Voluntary Peer Reviews are carried out.

If the ABCFP carries out a Practice Review on a member, that member will not be eligible to be chosen for another Practice Review for ten years, unless the adjudication of the member's Practice Review specifies that another Practice Review has to be carried out within a specified time.

Remedial Practice Reviews, carried out as part of the discipline process or the Practice Review adjudication process, will not contribute to the yearly determined Practice Review sample size.

### **3.2.4 Selection List Ranking**

Outside factors, or ranking, will not be considered during the random selection of eligible members for Practice Reviews. For example, separating eligible members into different practice risk categories before random selection is not practicable and the ABCFP does not have this type of information in the database. All members will be assessed the same rank for random sampling.

After eligible members have been chosen for a Practice Review, they will be interviewed over the phone by staff (section 4.1.1) and if their information or situations signifies a low-practice risk or feasibility (e.g. practising out of province or not practising professional forestry), staff may choose to defer (refer to the next section) the Practice Review until circumstances change or cancel the review and substitute another member for review.

Practice Review trends will be noted and future ranking may be initiated as a result of these trends.

### **3.2.5 Deferral**

Extenuating circumstances may unduly inconvenience or prevent a member from participating in a Practice Review. Some examples of extenuating circumstances could be medical conditions, bereavement or disaster. In such cases, a request to defer the Practice Review will be considered. The opportunity to present this request would be during the

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initial phone interview (see section 4.1.1). However, a member who receives a deferral will be sent a notice of a Practice Review after the deferral period. The deferral period will be determined according to individual circumstances.

### **3.3 Reviewer Selection**

#### **3.3.1 Selection of Reviewer**

The qualifications and independence of the reviewer or review team provides essential credibility to the Practice Review element. Staff will use the following criteria to select reviewers:

1. In most cases reviewer(s) will be (a) paid consultant(s). Preference will be given to select reviewers who have had a Practice Review carried out on their practice prior to taking on the role of reviewer if there is a choice available.
2. In some cases a reviewer will be ABCFP staff (e.g. a conflict arises using a consultant reviewer).
3. Consultants will submit proposals for evaluation to staff, outlining their qualifications and experience related to Practice Reviews.
4. Consultant and staff reviewers will receive sufficient training to become accredited before carrying out reviews. Consultants will be charged a fee for the training.
5. The review team will preferably consist of one reviewer who is a registered ABCFP member. Normally, RPFs would review RPFs and RFTs, and RFTs would review RFTs. An RFT could review an RPF if the RPF's practice falls entirely with the RFT's scope of practice.
6. At the discretion of staff, the review team can consist of one or more additional people. These additional reviewers must be registered members of a professional regulatory body. For example, if the reviewee also was a member of another professional association, staff could assign another reviewer of the same association.
7. Staff will match reviewer experience (sufficient professional and technical experience) to that of the reviewee.
8. Staff will maintain and update (collect, screen and validate applicants) a list of qualified reviewers who cover the general areas of practice and geography of BC and can be drawn upon when required.

#### **3.3.2 Reviewer Qualifications**

The following is a list of reviewer qualifications, each reviewer will be required to verify or declare the following, (prior to commencing the review):

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1. The reviewer is able to provide independent, unbiased reviews with no real or perceived conflict of interest (e.g.: a reviewer cannot review someone who is professionally associated or personally related to him or her) and is known to be a reputable professional.
2. Reviewers cannot be in a position to financially benefit from information gained as a result of carrying out a Practice Review by being able to compete with the reviewee's services.
3. If the reviewer is a consultant, he or she will be given the chance to agree with the selection of the reviewer in order to avoid the above.
4. The reviewer must have technical knowledge of the area of practice of the member being reviewed.
5. The reviewer must be competent and accredited to ABCFP standards to conduct a Practice Review.
6. The reviewer must take an oath of confidentiality.
7. The reviewer must provide confirmation of being a registered member of good standing in a regulatory body (usually the ABCFP), including not having any history of proven unethical conduct or indictable offence.
8. The reviewer must possess current knowledge of applicable professional standards, current applicable policies and rules and legislation.
9. The reviewer must have Professional experience equal to, or in excess, of the reviewee.

### **3.3.3 Reviewer Training**

The aim of reviewer training is to provide reviewers with a comprehensive understanding of the techniques required for the ABCFP Practice Review process and its philosophical foundation. The training should enable reviewers to confidently and effectively conduct reviews against the applicable framework/standards.

Training of reviewers may be delivered with a variety of methods including information from Practice Review guides, group discussion and classroom facilitation that includes exercises in which the trainees will simulate aspects of their role during the Practice Review. Reviewer training will be delivered at various locations (across the province) by staff or qualified personnel on a consistent basis and training materials will be available on the ABCFP website.

At a minimum, the training program will include the following:

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- Background and an overview of the components of the Continuing Competency program and the reasons for its development.
- Applicable professional standards.
- Role of the reviewer and the required approach.
- The Practice Review process:
  - the assessment of documentation and statutory requirements;
  - identifying evidence required to assess compliance;
  - carrying out assessment interviews;
  - practical tips on how to get the most from the observation of work practices as part of an assessment;
  - analyzing information gathered;
  - demonstrating professional skepticism and objectivity (See section 4.2);
  - documenting notes from all these stages and producing a final report; and
  - delivering feedback.

### **3.4 Practice Review Scope**

The Practice Review process is intended to confirm that a member who practises professional forestry in whole or in part, does so in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of the *Foresters Act* and ABCFP Bylaws, particularly the Code of Ethics (Bylaw 11) and Standards of Professional Practice (Bylaw 12). The Practice Review process also confirms that the member is performing in a manner consistent with the standards of reputable professionals practising in the same field.

Reviews will be of a general nature and at the reviewer's discretion, may turn in to a technical review as well. All reviews will be scheduled for both a general and technical review (a full day) but reviewers will only carry out a technical review if the half-day general review has significant negative findings (refer to section 4.2) or if the reviewee requests a technical review.

#### **3.4.1 Scope of General Reviews**

A general review verifies and finalizes the information provided by the reviewee during the initial phone interview and assesses the reviewee's continuing competency achievements, scope of practice, continuing education records, maintenance of professional work records, quality assurance practices and access to resources. The criteria for evaluation are based on the *Foresters Act* and association Bylaws. A general

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review could use a relevant technical example to guide the reviewer through the professional process, but would not verify the technical data. Refer to section 4.2.1 for details about the general review process.

### **3.4.2 Scope of Technical Reviews**

Technical reviews confirm that the member is performing in a manner consistent with technical standards. A technical review includes detailed examination of typical samples of calculations, reports, written opinions or decisions, estimates, specifications, plans, data collection, contract documents, drawings or maps, recommendations and interpretations.

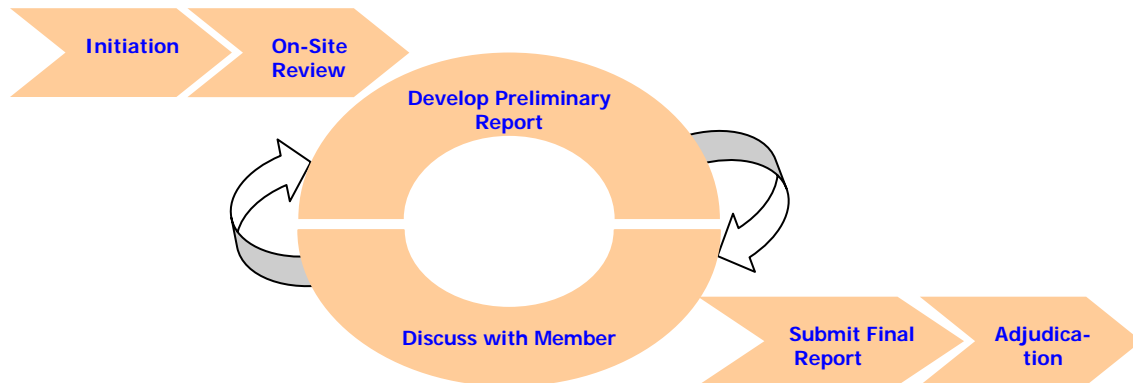
Refer to section 4.2.2 for details about the technical review process.

## **4. Practice Review Process**

The Practice Review's main objectives are to provide constructive feedback to members and ensure quality assurance. The intent is not to identify areas where the member is in non-compliance with standards and regulations. Feedback is given during the Practice Review and at the report stage for the member being reviewed. It is also provided for the general membership when issues, best practices and trends are highlighted in Practice Review bulletins (refer to section 6.1). Practice Review discussions will be held in strict confidence between the reviewee, reviewer, staff and the CCC.

It is proposed that a five stage Practice Review process be adopted. The stages are:

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#### **4.1 Initiation (Selection Notice by Phone and Preparation)**

Once the eligible member selection list has been established, a notice of selection for Practice Review will be initiated by phone calls to all selected members. These initial phone calls will include a reviewee interview to collect information that will facilitate the Practice Review process.

##### **4.1.1 Initial Phone Interview**

The initial phone interview (carried out by staff) determines if a Practice Review should be carried out, deferred or waived. If a Practice Review is to be carried out, the phone interview will collect and provide further information that prepares both the reviewee and reviewer for the on-site portion of the Practice Review. The information collected and provided during the phone interview will be documented.

##### **Notice of Selection Information**

###### **General Information:**

1. Verify name, address, and contact information.

###### **Reasons for Deferral:**

2. Are there any reasons why the Practice Review should be deferred (e.g. medical condition, bereavement, disaster)?

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Scope of Practice:

3. What are the area(s) of practice or main job responsibilities?
4. How much of your present time (%) is spent practising professional forestry as per Section 1 of the *Foresters Act*, or Bylaw 6.1 and 6.2 and the Guidelines on Scope of Practice for Registered Forest Technologists?
5. If you practise outside the province of BC, please explain the circumstances.

If the information collected from the phone interview verifies that the member practises outside the province, the association will waive the requirement for an on-site Practice Review. Members who do not practise professional forestry may still have Practice Reviews but with the limited budget available for Practice Reviews, the focus will be to concentrate on members who spend a significant part of their time practising professional forestry. These decisions will be based on the information provided in the phone interview.

**Practice Review Information to Prepare for the On-site Visit**

Education and Resume:

1. Provide your post secondary education information.
2. List your most recent continuing education items: courses, workshops, conferences, seminars, committees, presentations within the past three years.
3. List ABCFP guidance papers read over the past year as found on the ABCFP website under “Regulating the Profession – Policies and Guidelines.”
4. Outline your work experience during your career (resume).
5. List any technical/professional affiliations you belong to in BC or outside BC.

Employment Information:

6. List your employment information (employer, title, time in current position).
7. List your previous employer and the position you held.
8. Provide the name, title and contact information of an individual of authority (if appropriate) in your organization who the reviewer may contact.

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9. Provide the Self-Assessment professional development plan from the previous two years.
10. Provide the professional development plan from the most recent Voluntary Peer Review.

Scope of Practice:

11. Show how your previous experience enables you to practice in your current area.
12. Provide a list of representative projects or professional work products you have worked on over the past two years.

Maintenance of Records

13. Describe how you maintain adequate files for the administration, management and interpretation of your work, as it relates to your professional duties.

Quality Assurance

14. How many of your work products over the past two years, listed above, have you signed and sealed?
15. Do you delegate or contract out any work to others? If so, specify your level of supervision and quality control.
16. Is this delegated or contract work carried out by a forest professional if it meets the definition of professional forestry practice? Or, if it falls under the practice of forest technology, is the work carried out by a forest professional, or supervised or designed by a RFT?
17. Please describe the due diligence process you use to carry out your important professional work.
18. How do you encourage or consider the safety of others in your role as a forest professional?
19. If non-confidential, provide the results and follow-up actions of any other audits which affected your professional practice.

Access to Resources

20. Please provide a list of technical resources available to you in order for you to carry out your work (e.g.: books, manuals, procedures, policies, computer or web resources, software, technical standards, mentors, specialists).

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This information will be forwarded to the reviewer. The phone interview will give the reviewee a good idea of the information and types of documentation that need to be available for the on-site portion of the Practice Review. The reviewee will then receive a Practice Review Guide, reference to appropriate sections of the *Foresters Act* and Bylaws, a Practice Review agenda, and instructions.

#### **4.1.2 Assigning a Reviewer**

Upon receipt of the initial phone interview information, staff will assign a suitable reviewer to the identified reviewee. This selection will be based on similarities in experience and scope of practice between the reviewee and the list of potential reviewers. The reviewer should not be the one who completed the reviewee's most recent review (Peer or Practice Review). Once assigned, both the reviewer and reviewee will be notified and given an opportunity to disclose any conflict of interest, real or perceived, to ABCFP staff.

#### **4.1.3 Meeting Location**

The on-site Practice Review will generally be held at the reviewee's place of business for convenient access to documentation and the reviewer will gain a sense of the reviewee's working environment. Alternately, the venue could be at a mutually agreed upon neutral location where the reviewee may feel more comfortable and other employees at the reviewee's office would not be adversely impacted by the Practice Review. If applicable, the reviewer and reviewee will need to work out logistics for the transportation of documentation.

#### **4.1.4 Meeting Length**

The reviewer and reviewee should set aside a half day for the on-site review. With a wide range in scope of practice among members, the time to conduct the review will likely vary and may take longer if a technical review is completed.

### **4.2 On-Site Practice Review**

The on-site portion of the Practice Review is a face-to-face meeting between the reviewee and the reviewer(s). The site visit starts with a general review where the

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reviewer evaluates the documented phone interview information, continuing competence records, scope of practice, continuing education records, record maintenance, quality assurance programs, and access to resources. If the reviewee spends a significant amount of time in the field, the reviewer can conduct the review with a field visit. Through all of these evaluations, appropriate documentation must be readily available for the reviewer.

Reviewers will demonstrate high levels of objectivity while conducting the review and they will incorporate the concept of the assumption of reviewee's good faith backed by evidentiary material.

If reviewers have significant negative findings during the general review, they may carry out a technical review in addition to the general review. The following are criteria for initiating a technical review:

1. Failure of completing a Self-Assessment or of achieving/implementing Self-Assessment professional development plan objectives (unless sufficient rationale is provided for not achieving development plan objectives).
2. Failure to participate in continuing education activities to keep up to date in the reviewee's area of practice.
3. Reviewee operating outside their area of expertise.
4. Inadequate professional work records.
5. Inadequate quality assurance or due diligence practices associated with the reviewee's scope of practice.
6. Inadequate access to resources to perform professional responsibilities associated with the reviewee's scope of practice.

#### **4.2.1 Procedure for General Reviews**

The general review starts with the reviewer verifying that the documented initial phone interview information is correct and checking if the reviewee wants to add further information. The initial phone interview information is the main basis for completing the general review. After the reviewer is satisfied that the phone interview information is in

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order and complete, the general review is continued as laid out in the following subsections:

**4.2.1.1 Continuing Competency**

The reviewer will check all continuing competency documents completed by the reviewee (e.g. Self-Assessments, Voluntary Peer Reviews). The reviewer will verify that the reviewee has completed a Self-Assessment and the accompanying professional development plan goals have been achieved, are being implemented or variances are explained. Failure of any one of these requirements may trigger a technical review.

If the reviewee has carried out a Voluntary Peer Review within the last five years, the reviewer will check to see if the accompanying professional development plan goals have been achieved or are being implemented. Failure to achieve Voluntary Peer Review professional development plan goals is not a trigger for a technical review but would require a development plan implementation recommendation in the final report. This is only applicable for members who have voluntarily requested to have a Practice Review, since members who have carried out a Voluntary Peer Review would not be chosen for a Practice Review for a period of five years.

**4.2.1.2 Scope of Practice**

Reviewers will assess the scope of a reviewee's practice. This assessment will include:

- Determining the main types of projects undertaken by the member;
- Evaluating the role played by the member in these projects; and
- Noting the level of responsibility assumed or taken by the member.

Reviewers may also review projects and documents as a means of verifying the reviewee's scope of practice. These documents can include contracts, prescriptions, log books, time sheets, job description, proposals, reports, etc. Note that this is not a technical review of documents.

Once the scope of practice has been determined, the reviewer will evaluate the reviewee's education and/or experience and continuing education records to determine if the

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reviewee is adequately qualified and is practising within his/her area of competence (refer to next section).

#### **4.2.1.3 Continuing Education Records**

The reviewer will check to see if the reviewee has been keeping a record of continuing education activities. The reviewer can use the personal activity record from the ABCFP voluntary Professional Development Program as a guide to evaluate the reviewee's continuing education records.

Failure to produce continuing education records is not a significant finding to trigger a technical review, but the reviewee must be able to describe recent continuing education activities within the past 3 years to demonstrate that he or she is remaining competent within his or her scope of practice as per Bylaw 11.4.6. If the reviewee has not been keeping continuing education records, the reviewer will recommend, in the final report, that these records be kept.

Once the reviewer has determined the reviewee's scope of practice as per the previous section, experience, post-secondary education and continuing education activities, he or she must make a decision whether the reviewee is qualified to practise within his or her scope of practice. If the reviewee is not qualified to carry out tasks within the scope of practice, the reviewee must demonstrate that qualified professionals, specialists or peers, were consulted or used to complete those tasks.

#### **4.2.1.4 Maintenance of Records**

Reviewers will verify if the reviewee maintains relevant and adequate files for the administration, management, and interpretation of the reviewee's work as it relates to the practice of professional forestry. For example, the reviewer will check the following records:

1. Availability of professional work records (hard copy files and/or digital files). If they are available in digital files, is there a process to retrieve them as technology is updated?

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2. Availability of backup digital files.
3. Availability of ancillary documents such as e-mails, conceptual draft notes, field notes on paper, maps or aerial photos, memos, draft versions, or supporting documents.
4. Documentation of phone calls or verbal communication.
5. Use of a professional daily diary or equivalent.

The reviewer will use professional discretion to determine whether the inadequacy of professional records will trigger a technical review.

#### **4.2.1.5 Quality Assurance**

The reviewer will assess whether a reviewee's work is in compliance with the Use of Professional Seal and Signature Bylaw (Bylaw 10) and Due Diligence Standard of Professional Practice Bylaw (Bylaw 12.5.1). The reviewer will use the Guidelines for Interpretation and Actions under this Bylaw as a guide. The reviewer should be satisfied that the reviewee is taking and documenting the necessary steps to ensure that the desired outcome is achieved or that the chances of a negative outcome or consequence are minimized. The reviewer will look for the following examples (not a complete list) to demonstrate a reviewee's due diligence:

- checklists, or standard operating procedures;
- decision keys or aids;
- procedures to ensure legal requirements and internal policies have been followed;
- quality assurance procedures for hiring contractors and checking work done by others;
- risk management assessments; and
- is professional work signed and sealed as per Bylaw 10?

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If the reviewee's work is not in compliance with either Bylaw 10 or 12.5.1, the reviewer will carry out a technical review.

#### **4.2.1.6 Access to Resources**

Reviewers will confirm the reviewee has access to all required and necessary technical, legal and personnel resources to perform the professional responsibilities associated with the reviewee's scope of practice. Reviewers will establish whether the member is in frequent contact with experienced peers and that all available resources are appropriate, relevant and current in relation to the reviewee's scope of practice. Examples of resources are:

- qualified personnel (staff or contractors) to carry out professional work;
- supervisors, clients, mentors or peers to provide guidance and advice;
- reasonable budget or contract amount to carry out professional work; and
- available references (hard copy or digital).

If access to appropriate resources is inadequate, the reviewer will assess how the reviewee has tried to remedy this situation. If the reviewee has not attempted to improve on the inadequate resources, the reviewer will initiate a technical review.

#### **4.2.2 Procedure for Technical Reviews**

If, during the general review, the reviewer encounters significant negative findings as per section 4.2.1, a technical review will be initiated. A reviewee can also request a technical review to be completed. Reviewers will be compensated for extra time spent carrying out technical reviews. For the majority of Practice Reviews, it is expected that only a general review will be carried out.

The following outlines how a reviewer will carry out a technical review.

1. The reviewer will determine the significant (i.e. work associated with greater than 15% of the reviewee's time) types of work products within the reviewee's scope of practice or job responsibilities (e.g. plans, recommendations, data collected,

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- estimates, reports, contract documents, survey results, calculations or maps) and choose one work product for each significant work product type.
2. The reviewer will also collect, determine or become familiar with the technical standards and assumptions used, to which the work product applies. It is expected that the reviewer has the experience and qualifications to be familiar with the reviewee's scope of practice.
  3. The reviewer will carry out a technical review of each work product. This can take place in the field or the office, whichever is applicable. For an office review, the reviewer may take a copy of the work product and review it off site.
  4. Reviewers can only carry out a technical review on non-confidential work products or on confidential work products if appropriate permission has been granted in writing. The reviewer must maintain confidentiality during and after the technical review process and cannot discuss the contents of the reviewee's work product with anyone but the reviewee or someone the reviewee has provided the reviewer with permission (e.g. the reviewee's supervisor).
  5. The reviewer will review the work product against determined technical standards, assumptions supplied by the reviewee and applicable Bylaws (6, 10, 11 and 12) from the *Foresters Act*.
  6. The reviewer can use various ABCFP guidance papers to assess work products while carrying out technical reviews. However, the content in these papers are guidance, not standards, so non-conformance with respect to guidance papers should be handled by providing advice in the final report, rather than providing a negative significant finding, or, by the reviewer asking for a rationale as to why the reviewee did not follow the guidance.
  7. The reviewer will consider the following while reviewing technical work products:
    - Bylaw 6: Is the work product consistent with the extent of the reviewee's education training and experience as per Bylaws 6.1.1 and 6.1.2?
    - Are professional work products signed and sealed as per Bylaw 10?
    - Are professional work products consistent with appropriate Sections of the Code of Ethics (Bylaws 11.3, 11.4, 11.5 and 11.6)? The reviewer may need to engage in dialogue with the reviewee to carry out this assessment.
    - Is the professional work product consistent with Bylaw 12.2.1 (Knowledge Standard), 12.2.2 (Completeness and Correctness Standard) and 12.2.3 (Professional Care Standard)?
    - Is the professional work product consistent with the other Standards of Professional Practice? (Bylaws 12.3, 12.4, 12.5 and 12.6)?

### **4.3 Confidentiality**

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The Practice Review process respects all professional work and reviewers will not request information from reviewees if it is confidential. If all or most of the tasks carried out by a reviewee are confidential, the reviewer, bound by an oath of confidentiality (a signed form), will ask for written permission to view appropriate confidential information. If written permission cannot be given, the Practice Review will proceed as best as possible without the confidential information.

#### **4.4 Review Feedback and Report**

During the process of the review, both the reviewer and reviewee will maintain open dialogue in a respectful fashion. The intent is to ensure constructive feedback in a sensitive and appropriate manner both during the review and in the subsequent report.

The on-site review will be the basis of the Practice Review report. Practice Review reports are prepared by the reviewer following completion of the site visit. A draft report will be sent to the reviewee within two weeks of the review date. The reviewee must consider the draft report and respond to the reviewer, with any clarification or concerns in writing, within two weeks from the date of receipt of the report.

After considering the reviewee's comments on the draft report, the reviewer will finalize the Practice Review report and submit a final copy to staff within two weeks of receiving reviewee feedback. Staff will adjudicate reports where the member is in compliance and the review is finalized. In this circumstance, staff may provide suggestion(s) for practice improvement(s).

The CCC will adjudicate final Practice Review reports if the member is judged to require modification or improvement in specified areas. Follow-up will be required to confirm that corrective measures have been implemented.

In extreme cases, if the review finds serious breaches of conduct as outlined in section 5.3, staff will forward the reviewee's file to the ABCFP registrar for consideration in the complaint process.

Written confirmation of the adjudication, complete with the final report, will be sent to the reviewee.

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The final report consists of the documented initial phone interview information verified by both the reviewee and reviewer [the documentation must be signed (verified) by the reviewer with comments added, if appropriate] plus the completed General Review Form and Technical Review Form, if applicable.

Refer to Appendix C for the Initial Phone Interview Information, the General Review Form and the Technical Review Form.

## **5. Practice Review Cost Elements and Follow-up**

The expense of the Practice Review element will be significant to the association due to its potential size and complexity. It is anticipated that costs from this element will come from revenues generated from workshops, operating fund surpluses and gradual increase of membership dues. The following are potential cost aspects and follow-up requirements.

### **5.1 Planning & Co-ordination Costs**

A database to support the tracking and selection of reviewers and reviewees will be developed specific to the needs of the program. The ABCFP will evaluate options for developing an appropriate application/database to meet the requirements of the Practice Review element.

Staff time will be another expense to the program. The cost (budget item) for this position will start in 2008 when training will be developed and implemented for potential reviewers.

It is recognized that there will be a cost to employers as well (reviewee's time).

#### **5.1.2 Reviewer Costs**

The reviewer's time costs and related expenses will make up the majority of the costs to the program once it is fully operational. This time will not only include the on-site review time, but also preparation leading to the review and time to complete the report and correspond with the reviewee and staff. The total cost of this portion of the Practice

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Review will be dependent on the number and length of Practice Reviews undertaken annually.

## **5.2 Remedial Action**

Once the report has been finalized and sent out to the reviewee, there should be no surprises, as active dialogue is encouraged during the on-site review and through preparing the report. The final reports may include remedial action plans that need to be addressed and reported back to staff and the CCC upon resolution. Examples of this could include further training in a specific practice area or upgrading a documentation filing system. For these situations, there will be a tracking mechanism incorporated into the ABCFP's database to ensure appropriate follow-up by agreed upon timelines.

### **5.2.1 Dispute Resolution**

The purpose of the reviewee's review of the draft report is to provide an opportunity for the member to provide clarification, if needed, or challenge the findings from the Practice Review (see section 4.4). Once the report is finalized, if the reviewee is still not satisfied with the general and/or technical review report, a formal appeal can be submitted to the CCC. This appeal must be provided in writing to staff who will forward the appeal to the CCC chair for consideration. Appeals must be received within 30 calendar days of the date that the reviewee receives the final report. The CCC will adjudicate the appeal and report back to staff with a rationale supporting their final and binding decision, whereupon staff will document the appeal decision and rationale and report the determination to the reviewee.

The CCC may access all reports, files and materials which formed part of the Practice Review. In addition, the CCC may interview the reviewee, the reviewer(s), staff and others who have pertinent information regarding the appeal.

All appeal proceedings are confidential. All reports and pertinent documents will be retained in the reviewee's file.

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If the reviewee appeals the findings of a general review, which triggered a technical review, and if the CCC adjudicates the appeal in the reviewee's favour, staff will delete all records of the technical review on the database and reviewee's file.

### **5.3 Findings of Serious Misconduct**

Practice Reviews are not intended to be a vehicle for investigating and bringing discipline matters to the complaint resolution process. The Practice Review process is separate from, and unrelated to, the complaint resolution process and should remain so, except for the most serious of cases. In the unlikely event a Practice Review reveals a matter of concern that has the potential to be referred to the complaint resolution process, it is expected that the reviewee and the reviewer(s) will be able to resolve the matter within the context of the Practice Review process itself. This attempt is consistent with the Bylaws (Code of Ethics) which obligates members to first try to resolve issues of concern (wherever practicable and appropriate to do so) between the parties or with reference to mentors and peers.

There are, of course, some matters that are wholly inappropriate to resolve within the Practice Review process. Generally speaking, these types of matters are the more serious instances of conduct unbecoming a member or gross incompetence which engage the broader public interest.

They include such things as:

- evidence of criminal or illegal activity;
- evidence of dishonesty;
- instances where the reviewer(s) believe there is imminent harm to the environment, individuals, or public health and/or safety;
- inability of the reviewee to produce evidence of completing a Self-Assessment.

In the event such situations do arise, the reviewer will bring the evidence to staff who will send notification to the CCC and then follow the complaint resolution process as appropriate.

## **5.4 Document Control**

Once the Practice Review is completed, the final report and review evidence (if applicable) will be stored. Access to this information will be closely monitored as these details are highly confidential (designated staff with access or passwords to these files will sign a confidentiality agreement). This protected access will be limited to designated staff, the chair of the CCC and an administrator. The selection list will be kept in the database as this will have an impact on further selection probability.

The association will keep review documents and reports on file for two years, before being destroyed. If there has been remedial action required as a result of the review, then the report will be kept on file for two years after the remediation is complete.

Information gathered in Practice Reviews will be utilized only for the purposes of this program and will not be admissible in court proceedings or subject to release under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## **6. Links to the Membership and Public**

The Practice Review program is designed to improve member professional practice and enhance the credibility of the membership. This means the program will have direct communication and knowledge sharing links built in to ensure maximum benefit to members and the public. Reviewees will benefit directly from the reviews, as they will receive immediate feedback on their professional practice. Relevant and useful information will be distributed to the entire membership without violating reviewee confidentiality.

### **6.1 News Bulletins**

Subsequent to each Practice Review, staff will receive a copy of the report, including any findings that may have resulted. A summary of these findings will be compiled by staff and at least once per year, staff will publish for the membership, a Practice Review bulletin without violating reviewee confidentiality. These bulletins or appropriate portions of them may be made available to the public.

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The yearly bulletin will include the Practice Review program forecasted budget, actual expenses, variance analysis, number of reviews completed, updates on proposed refinements to the process for the subsequent year, and a summary of the best management practices, issues and results encountered during the Practice Reviews.

In addition to the yearly bulletins, the CCC may, at its discretion, publish update bulletins if there are changes in the Continuing Competency Program or issues of significance which arise through Practice Reviews that are of high importance.

## **6.2 Professional Development Workshops**

Practice Review best management practices and issues may be incorporated into ABCFP workshops or ExpoFor continuing education sessions from time to time. These workshops will educate members on topics that often arise in Practice Reviews. Having this information and the strategies to deal with these issues will ensure Practice Reviews run more efficiently for members in the future.

## **Appendix A – *Foresters Act* and Bylaw References**

The following are Sections from the *Forester’s Act* and Bylaws relevant to providing authority for Practice Reviews (Refer to section 1.2 in this report):

### ***Foresters Act:***

*“Duty and objects of the association*

*4 (2) The objects of the association are the following:*

- (a) to uphold the public interest respecting the practice of professional forestry by
  - (i) ensuring the competence, independence, professional conduct and integrity of its members, and*
  - (ii) ensuring that each person engaged in the practice of professional forestry is accountable to the association;**

*9 (1) The council may make Bylaws as follows:*

- (a) regulating the practice of professional forestry, including establishing
  - (iii) quality assurance programs in areas such as continuing education and peer or Practice Review.”**

### **ABCFP Bylaws**

*Bylaw 12.2: Competence*

*12.2.1 Competent members maintain sufficient knowledge in their field(s) of practice.*

*12.2.2 Competent members ensure their work is complete, correct and clear.*

*12.2.3 Competent members exercise appropriate judgment and discretion with due care.*

*Bylaw 13: Quality Assurance*

*13.1 Council shall, in consultation with the general membership, develop and, by resolution, adopt and implement one (1) or more quality assurance programs required under the Foresters Act, binding on one (1) or more class and/or category of membership.*

*13.2 Any quality assurance program developed by council shall clearly set out the requirements members affected by that program must satisfy in order to retain their rights of membership and practice.*

## **Appendix B - The Definition of the Practice of Professional Forestry**

(Refer to section 1.3 in this report):

As defined in the *Foresters Act*, the practice of professional forestry means, for fees or other remuneration, advising on, performing or directing works, services or undertakings which, because of their scope and implications respecting forests, forest lands, forest resources and forest ecosystems, require the specialized education, knowledge, training and experience of a registered member, an enrolled member or a special permit holder, and includes the following:

- (a) *planning, advising on, directing, approving methods for, supervising, engaging in and reporting on the inventory, classification, valuation, appraisal, conservation, protection, management, enhancement, harvesting, silviculture and rehabilitation of forests, forest lands, forest resources and forest ecosystems;*
- (b) *the preparation, review, amendment and approval of professional documents;*
- (c) *assessing the impact of professional forestry activities to*
  - (i) *verify that those activities have been carried out as planned, directed or advised,*
  - (ii) *confirm that the goals, objectives or commitments that relate to those activities have been met, or*
  - (iii) *advise or direct corrective action as required to conserve, protect, manage, rehabilitate or enhance the forests, forest lands, forest resources or forest ecosystems;*
- (d) *auditing, examining and verifying the results of activities involving the practice of professional forestry, and the attainment of goals and objectives identified in or under professional documents;*
- (e) *planning, locating and approving forest transportation systems including forest roads;*
- (f) *assessing, estimating and analyzing the capability of forest lands to yield a flow of timber while recognizing public values related to forests, forest lands, forest resources and forest ecosystems.*

Section 20(2) of the *Foresters Act* permits RFTs to engage in activities that fall within the definition of practice of professional forestry as follows:

*A registered forest technologist may engage in aspects of the practice of professional forestry to the extent consistent with their education, training and experience*

- (a) *independently, if carrying out functions described in the Bylaws for this purpose,*

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- b) while executing, supervising the execution of or inspecting work designed by a professional forester admitted under Section 14 or special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit, or*
- (c) under the supervision of a professional forester admitted under Section 14 or a special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit.*

In turn, the ABCFP Bylaws provide that:

*6.1 Registered members shall:*

*6.1.2 In the case of Registered Forest Technologists:*

*6.1.2.1 May engage in aspects of the practice of professional forestry to the extent consistent with their education, training and experience:*

*6.1.2.1.1 While executing, supervising the execution of or inspecting work designed by a registered professional forester or special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit;*

*6.1.2.1.2 Under the direct supervision of a registered professional forester or special permit holder acting within the scope of their permit; or*

*6.1.2.1.3 Independently, if carrying out those aspects of professional forestry practice within the following general practice areas as are described in guidelines established by council from time-to-time:*

*6.1.2.1.3.1 Forest measurements;*

*6.1.2.1.3.2 Silviculture;*

*6.1.2.1.3.3 Forest Operations; and*

*6.1.2.1.3.4 Forest Protection.*

*6.2 The guidelines established pursuant to Bylaw 6.1.2.1.3 will take into account the:*

*6.2.1 Level of education required for;*

*6.2.2 Complexity of; and*

*6.2.3 Scope of accountability and authority that may be assumed for, a given task or set of tasks within each of the areas of practice listed in Bylaw 6.1.2.1.3.*

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**Appendix C - Practice Review Forms**

These will be completed once this report is finalized

Notice of Selection Information

Practice Review Initial Information to Prepare for the On-site Visit

General Review Form

Technical Review Form