



# Notice to the Profession

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## Professional Issues Related to Signing Appraisal Data Submissions

Date: December 2001

Please file this notice in your Professional Manual under the tab *Ethics and Responsibilities*.

### Background

Recent amendments to the *Coast Appraisal Manual* and *Interior Appraisal Manual* now require professional foresters to sign all Appraisal Data Submissions. This notice is intended as a guide for professional foresters with respect to their responsibilities regarding the signing and sealing of Appraisal Data Submissions.

### What does this mean to a submitting RPF?

Professional foresters who sign Appraisal Data Submissions are expected to be competent relative to appraisals and knowledgeable about the operational conditions (i.e. site, cruise, roads, harvesting methods, etc.) being appraised. They must use the best information available at the time of signing and ensure submissions are of a professional quality.

The signing forester may rely on others to provide information and otherwise contribute to the preparation of the Appraisal Data Submissions. When work has not been carried out directly by the signing forester and where that signing forester is satisfied that the work has been carried out to a professional standard they may sign and seal the submission and depending on the type of review undertaken, shall add a certification statement in accordance with ABCPF bylaws 13.2.1 and 13.2.2.

When signing Appraisal Data Submissions, foresters should ensure submissions reflect current plans and use the most appropriate data, estimates and assumptions available at the time. While plans may change and new and better information may subsequently become available, foresters will not be held accountable for changes that occur after the submission date so long as the information was not reasonably available at the time. Re-appraisals should similarly reflect any relevant changes that have occurred or come to light since the initial appraisal.

With respect to what constitutes the most appropriate data, estimates and assumptions; the information used in appraisal submissions is often determined by government policy (e.g. appraisal manuals). Such policy direction should be adhered to even if the data in question (e.g. lumber recovery factors) does not fully reflect the circumstances under appraisal. Foresters will not be held professionally accountable for using information in appraisal submissions that is

dictated by government policy. Foresters are however, entirely within their rights to advocate for change (e.g. via appraisal advisory committees) when such data seems inappropriate.

For information used in the appraisal submission not dictated by government policy—such as the timber to be harvested, site conditions, harvesting methods, silviculture plans, cruise data and other information—the forester is professionally accountable. The forester is responsible for verifying that the submission reflects the conditions and plans as they are at the time of submission, as well as the accuracy of the data.

### **What you must satisfy yourself with before you sign:**

As the professional forester who signs a submission, you should be satisfied that:

- All relevant factors have been considered.
- The data and cost estimates used to produce the submission—such as cruise data and detailed engineered cost estimates—are appropriate and representative given your current knowledge and information of the area.
- Information not gathered personally (often the case), was gathered by qualified people acting under appropriate instructions.
- The submission is logical given the signing forester's knowledge and experience.
- The policies and procedures outlined in the Appraisal Manual were followed.
- The appropriate caveat from ABCPF bylaw 13 is used when signing and sealing the submission.
- A proper peer review is in place for concepts as well as for errors and omissions.
- Proper support information is submitted with the appraisal or is available upon request.

Professional foresters within the Ministry of Forests may sign Appraisal Data Submissions on behalf of smaller licensees so long as they are not, or are not perceived to be, in a conflict of interest. The same high standard of professionalism and independent judgment is expected.

### **What does this mean to reviewing RPFs?**

As a reviewing forester the current standards of review should be followed as detailed in the *Professional Reliance Implementation Guidelines* (<http://www.rpf-bc.org/download/pro.pdf>) and the *Application of Professional Discretion Under the Forest Practices Code* (<http://www.rpf-bc.org/download/mainpat4.doc>). The following general application of the standards of review apply:

- All persons must show respectful regard toward each other.
- Reviewing staff will not impose their opinion and/or judgment over a valid opinion or judgment of the submitting forester.
- Reviewing staff review submissions and analyze potential concerns through the use of Standards of Review (available from the above sources).

Should there be a disagreement of professional opinion, then the submitting forester's opinion must be respected. Where the reviewing forester believes there is no doubt that there is a significant technical or scientific flaw, and where this cannot be resolved between the foresters, then a written rationale should be provided to the statutory decision maker who considers all information before making a decision.