



Canadian Institute of Forestry Institut forestier du Canada

CODE OF ETHICS

Approved by the Canadian Institute of Forestry National Board of Directors - December 2000

The "Code of Ethics" is intended to guide the conduct of all members of the Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut forestier du Canada (CIF/IFC) in their business relationships with the public, their employers and/or clients, their employees and each other. While promoting just and honourable relationships, mutual confidence, respect and competent service, this Code is meant to encourage the highest possible standards of stewardship on forest lands, both public and private, under the care and management of CIF/IFC members.

The "Guidelines and Standards" clarify the meaning and intent of the Code of Ethics by providing further guidance, examples and explanation. The Guidelines and Standards lay out in more detail the factors, issues and information that need to be considered in working toward achieving the high standards set forth in the Code of Ethics.

It is recognized that aiming for the best possible conduct and highest possible standards is an ideal that cannot necessarily be legally enforced. This Code is intended to provide guidelines and examples whereby members are afforded instruction, assistance and suggestions, should they encounter these situations. It is not intended to be a method to measure how far short of the ideal members might fall and how they should therefore be sanctioned.

Given the voluntary nature of CIF/IFC membership and the intent of this Code to offer guidance; disciplinary action against members, based on this Code of Ethics is not intended. Nonetheless, it is a foundation of this organization that its members commit to the highest possible standards of behaviour and stewardship in their approach to the practice of forestry. It is therefore expected that all CIF/IFC members will fully consider the guidance offered in this Code of Ethics and will take the necessary steps to ensure proper conduct in themselves and others.

Factors affecting CIF/IFC Members in the Practice of Forestry

CIF/IFC members represent a unique and, at the same time, very broad spectrum of expertise and interests in the practice of forestry. Membership is voluntary and includes woodlot owners, academics, scientists, politicians, forest technicians and technologists, foresters and those who are not directly involved in forest management. To describe this wide range of people and expertise, the term "forest practitioner" is used throughout this Code to reflect the diversity of

CIF/IFC membership. This broad spectrum of interests and applications means that this Code of Ethics will offer more guidance to some members than to others.

Since the CIF/IFC is a national organization, issues, legislation and policy at the local, provincial, national and international levels affect its members. Such factors include the ethical requirements of provincial professional and technical associations along with the legal requirements of the various Acts, Regulations and policies of the jurisdiction in which CIF/IFC members work. Forestry related activities at the international level also have the potential to affect the way CIF/IFC members practice forestry both in Canada and abroad.

The CIF/IFC Code of Ethics reflects the fact that many CIF/IFC members function within provincial jurisdictions and thus must be aware of and abide by the Codes of Ethics set out by provincial professional and technical bodies. As such, the CIF/IFC Code of Ethics was developed in concert with these existing Codes so as not to be in conflict with them.

Thanks and acknowledgement are extended to: The Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters; The Alberta Registered Professional Foresters Association; The Ontario Professional Foresters Association; L'ordre des ingénieurs forestiers du Québec; The Association of Registered Professional Foresters of New Brunswick; and The Society of American Foresters.

Code of Ethics

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A. Responsibility to Maintain the Public Good

I. Forest Stewardship

To advocate, promote and practice the highest possible standards of forest stewardship, based on ecologically sound principles, which will maintain, protect and enhance the integrity, utility and value of the forest resource for the benefit of society, without compromising the opportunity for present and future generations to meet their objectives.

Guidelines and Standards

Forest management requires making choices and gauging the short and long-term consequences of those choices on the forest, while seeking to meet the diverse demands of society. Forest management choices and decisions should be made with consideration for the multiplicity of values of forest resources including their ecological, economic, recreational, aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values. Decisions should include the consideration of public concerns and use sound ecological principles as their basis. Impacts resulting from management decisions should be examined, fully considered and mitigated to the greatest extent possible. The goals of society, as expressed by citizens and their various levels of government should be met, in the context of legislation, valid and current information, sound science, pertinent experience, responsible economics and rational planning.

II. Public Confidence

To inspire the public's confidence in the practice of forestry by maintaining high standards in one's conduct and daily work.

To carry out such work in a spirit of integrity, honesty, fairness, good faith and courtesy.

Guidelines and Standards

Forest practitioners have an obligation to the public to conduct themselves, both personally and professionally, in a respectful and dignified manner. Service should be put ahead of gain and excellence above quantity. Specialized skills and knowledge should be applied in the best interests of society, thereby inspiring confidence in the practice of forestry.

People should be treated with equality, while discrimination, harassment and other unethical behaviour will neither be practiced nor tolerated in others.

III. Public Understanding

To broaden the public's understanding of forests, the practice of forestry, the value of forestry to society and our commitment to the highest possible standards in the practice of forestry. The promotion of truthful and accurate statements on forestry matters should also be undertaken.

Guidelines and Standards

It is essential that the knowledge and skill of the forest practitioner be used to promote an enhanced public understanding of the forest resources, forest regulations and practices so that the public may be able to make informed decisions as to how forests can best be managed and conserved. When asked, expertise should be provided to those who society or employers have empowered, to help them in their forestry related tasks. For example, expert advice should be provided to elected representatives and those involved in drafting legislation and policy related to forests.

When engaging in activities that will broaden the public's knowledge of forestry, all statements and professional opinion should, to the best of one's ability, be truthful, accurate and objective. Professional opinion should be expressed only when founded on adequate knowledge of the facts and upon solid technical experience and competence in the subject matter. It should be clearly stated on whose behalf opinions are being provided. Untrue, incomplete, biased or exaggerated statements will be challenged and corrected. Information cannot be distorted or withheld in order to support or refute a particular opinion or perspective.

Information can only be withheld when such information is provided in confidence by the client or employer and must be held as confidential unless authorization is provided to release such information.

IV. Public Welfare and Safety

To have proper regard, in all aspects of work, for the safety, health and welfare of the public and the potential impacts of forestry practices on public welfare.

Guidelines and Standards

Forestry practices can have wide ranging effects on the welfare of the public both today and in the future. Forest practitioners should be aware of the social and environmental factors related to forest management that could affect the public. Such factors include but are not limited to aesthetic values, spiritual values, cultural benefits, economic benefits, wildlife habitat and ecological integrity.

The forest contains many natural hazards and potentially dangerous conditions. The public should be made aware of these known dangers and advised of the proper actions to take to avoid them. Legal obligations with respect to environmental, industrial and construction safety legislation must be clearly understood and complied with. All necessary safety precautions and public notices must be maintained and no plans should be approved or undertaken if they are seen to jeopardize the safety, health and welfare of the public, forest workers or other forest users.

B. Responsibility to the Profession

I. Improve the Practice of Forestry.

To work towards improving the standards, practices and policies that affect the stewardship of forest land.

Guidelines and Standards

Every effort should be made to keep informed and aware of current technical, professional, political, economic and environmental issues pertaining to forestry and to improve the level of education and knowledge in the practice of forestry. Such efforts should include reviews of current literature, attending professional development seminars and conferences, consulting with other practitioners and seeking other sources of current information, including electronic sources.

Keeping informed with respect to laws related to the practice of forestry in the jurisdiction in which one works is another important aspect of improving forestry practice. Maintaining a professional or technical designation through provincial professional and technical bodies, if such organizations exist, will assist in keeping up to date on appropriate legislation. Maintaining active membership and participation in national and provincial forestry organizations and educational institutions will also keep forest practitioners current. Maintaining efforts in continuing education programs, both formal and informal, will ensure knowledge remains current. In provinces where professional and technical organizations do not exist, working towards the creation of these organizations is an important way to ensure standards and measures will be in place in all jurisdictions.

Scientific and technical knowledge and skill should be developed and maintained and all work undertaken should be consistent with current scientific knowledge. When new approaches and emerging science begin to challenge traditional practices, these new methods should be explored, communicated to others and adopted where appropriate.

II. Ensure Competency

To undertake only such work as the person is competent to perform by virtue of their training and experience and to strive to improve the competence of all those practicing forestry.

Guidelines and Standards

Only work for which the individual has the training and experience should be undertaken. Activities or circumstances where it is unlikely that competent service can be provided should be avoided. If additional expertise is required, other forest practitioners and/or specialists should be retained.

Employees or those under the supervision of senior practitioners should be provided opportunities to increase their expertise. Experience should be as wide ranging as possible but work assignments should be geared to an individual's expertise, competence and level of responsibility. All work carried out or supervised should meet the highest possible standards of

stewardship and all documents must be complete, comply with legal requirements and reflect the best possible forest management principles. Forest practitioners should be capable of conducting all aspects of their work in an efficient and competent manner and individuals should seek reviews and evaluations of their work on a regular basis.

The work of others must be given credit and acknowledged. Forest management principles and the rights of others should be upheld against the demands of employment.

C. Responsibility to the Employer/Client

I. Consistent, Professional and Dedicated Service

To promote the best interests of an employer or client by consistently maintaining high standards of performance while acting in a conscientious, diligent and efficient manner.

Guidelines and Standards

Forest practitioners are obliged to provide dedicated, professional service in the interest of achieving their employer's objectives, except where such services may conflict with legal or professional duties or responsibilities. Forest practitioners should not misrepresent their own abilities either in advertising or competition for the provision of services. The principle of just compensation, based on comparative qualifications, degree of responsibility and difficulty of work, as well as upon responsible and equitable negotiation of adequate salary scales, is accepted. Forest practitioners should strive to deliver all work on time and in a complete and accurate manner, giving fair notice of any delays or deficiencies in the work. No compensation in any form should be accepted for a particular service from more than one source without the full knowledge and consent of all interested parties.

II. Consequences of Actions

To anticipate and advise employers or clients of the consequences of any contemplated policy, procedure or course of action which, based on professional judgment, is not consistent with the principles of sound forestry practice and best possible stewardship of forest land.

Guidelines and Standards

Specialized knowledge regarding the practice of forestry includes an understanding of the potential moral, legal and environmental consequences of forestry related activities that may not be anticipated or understood by an employer or client. Although they may not always be responsible for the employer's or client's final decisions or actions, forest practitioners should be responsible to fully inform their employer or client of the potential consequences. When a forest practitioner believes that the employer's or client's actions will be detrimental to the best possible forest stewardship of forest land, they should apply reasonable efforts to ensure that the employer or client fully comprehends the reasons for concern and/or the possible consequences of the actions. The availability of possible alternative actions and their implications should also be described. The potential results of such actions must be expressed as accurately as possible, noting any unsubstantiated factors or issues.

The employer or client should be made aware of the limits of knowledge available in a particular situation. Assumptions that are made about a particular course of action and the anticipated results need to be fully explained. Where knowledge is incomplete, measures should be put in place to gain additional knowledge. Where assumptions are made, a range of outcomes, based on a range of reasonable assumptions should be provided. Tests and procedures, which can verify that assumptions are reasonable or need to be adjusted, should

be in place.

III. Confidentiality

To hold as confidential and not to disclose information obtained as to the affairs, technical methods, practices and processes of the employer or client, unless released from this obligation by the employer or client, or except as required to do so by law.

Guidelines and Standards

In the course of their employment, forest practitioners may be exposed to confidential information that is the exclusive property of their employer or client. It is incumbent upon the forest practitioner to keep such information confidential, except when disclosure is required by an appropriate authority. In all cases, forest practitioners must exercise judgement in the use and disclosure of confidential information.

Confidential or proprietary information received from, or prepared for a previous or current employer or client must not be disclosed without the consent of the previous employer or client. Similarly, confidential information should not be used for a forest practitioner's benefit or the benefit of a third party without the owner's consent. Forest practitioners should ensure the maintenance of confidentiality by all persons in their employ.

IV. Conflict of Interest

To ensure that activities related to all forestry undertakings do not conflict with the interests of their employer or client.

Guidelines and Standards

In the course of conducting their work-related activities, forest practitioners must pay special attention to any possible conflict with the interests of their employer or client, or between clients. Forest practitioners should not undertake any assignment that may create a conflict or even the appearance of such conflict with the interests of their employer or client without the full knowledge of the employer or client.

Any business connections, interests or circumstances that might be construed as prejudicial to the judgment of the forest practitioner in rendering service to the employer or client should be promptly and fully disclosed to the forest practitioner's employer or client. The forest practitioner should be prepared to act immediately to resolve such conflict.

When there is any doubt as to which course of action to follow, forest practitioners are encouraged to seek the advice of their professional or technical association, senior practitioners, a member of any Section Council, the Executive Committee, or legal counsel. In all such cases, forest practitioners should record their actions and the steps that were taken to resolve any potential conflict of interest.

D. Responsibility to Other Professionals

I. Fairness

To conduct oneself in a manner that demonstrates personal dignity and respect towards other forest practitioners, who are involved in the practice of forestry at all levels.

Guidelines and Standards

Where differences of opinion exist between forest practitioners or others with regard to the practice of forestry, discussions should be undertaken with a view to resolving such differences. Such discussions should be professional in nature, using neutral, non-personal language and descriptions. Undignified or unfair criticism should be avoided and there should be no attempt to injure the reputation or business of other forest practitioners. Malicious or damaging information must be avoided and must not be used to gain an advantage over another forest practitioner. Persons using malicious or damaging information should be advised and steps taken to correct their actions.

II. Support

To provide advice, recognition, support and guidance to those practicing forestry in order to assist in furthering and enhancing their efforts and to ensure that the best possible practices and objectives are undertaken and recognized.

Guidelines and Standards

The work of other forest practitioners should not be interfered with unless it is determined to be in conflict with recognized standards. Offers to share information and experience with others and to assess the work of others, should be made. The work of others should only be assessed with their full knowledge, unless such assessments are in the form of recognized and often anonymous peer review of scientific or technical papers.

It is appropriate to:

- provide opportunities for the professional development and advancement of forest practitioners including employees and/or less experienced individuals;
- recognize and give credit for work done by others and support qualified individuals in gaining membership in the CIF/IFC and other associations and societies;
- cultivate an esprit de corps among forest practitioners and recognize the outstanding contributions made to forestry by forest practitioners through CIF/IFC national awards and other mechanisms; and
- recognize and welcome new forest practitioners to the profession through support and participation at events such as ring ceremonies and graduations.

III. Questionable Practice

To strive to avoid improper or questionable practices in their own work and in the work of others and to take steps as soon as possible to correct such practices and minimize their impacts on both the resource and the reputation of those engaged in the practice of forestry.

Guidelines and Standards

If, in the opinion of a forest practitioner, another forest practitioner is undertaking an action that is likely to cause damage to the resource, steps should be taken to correct such action. Minor technical issues should be resolved between forest practitioners. More serious violations may warrant a formal complaint to the appropriate licensing body.