

## **Q&A**

### **Continuing Competency Credits**

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#### **Overview**

The ASFP serves the public interest by promoting professional conduct and the competent, ethical management of the province's forests. ASFP members are required to maintain proficiency in their jobs through continuing education – by staying current with new information, developments, and thinking.

The continuing competency program is described on the ASFP website. In short, members must complete 150 hours of education and professional development during a three-year period, distributed within three categories:

- 1) Formal Education and Training (a minimum of 50 hours over the three year period)
- 2) Self-Directed Reading and Forestry Profession Business Meetings (100 hours maximum)
- 3) Professional Practice and Technology Transfer. (100 hours maximum)

A "Continuing Competency Tracking Form" (found on the website) must also be kept current.

#### **Guidance**

When thinking about what to include as a continuing education credit, ask yourself if it is learning activity that is incremental to your regular duties. Credit (12 hours) can already be claimed just for actively practicing forestry. What you claim beyond that should be related to incremental learning and staying current – not activities that are part of doing your job.

We cannot define every possible learning or job activity. There is guidance on what to include in the program document, but there will still be many shades of grey. So we rely in part on a member's sense of what is appropriate to guide them. We also ask for an annual declaration of hours and randomly audit tracking forms. Ultimately, the intent is not to punish those who are not keeping up as much as to encourage them to learn and stay current.

#### **Questions & Answers**

The Continuing Competency Committee provided the following answers to questions that arose in early 2012, as members were submitting their total hours of credit for 2011.

*Does formal OH&S-related training (such as ATV certification or First Aid), that is required for someone's job, count towards the continuing competency hours?*

Yes. Classes on topics related to OH&S are not related to forestry directly, but are professionally enriching just as computer classes and management classes would be. According to the program document, "*Also included is organized course work or activities not specifically related to forestry but which are professionally enriching or directly benefit the individual in his or her present position. Examples include course work in computer science, managerial skills, public speaking and other areas.*"

*Does participating as a member of an OH&S Committee qualify?*

No. 'Training' is the eligible component for continuing competency credit (e.g. OH&S Accident Investigation Training), but not being a member of an OH&S committee.

*Under Category 3 of "Professional Practice and Technology Transfer," can the development of Forest Management Operating Plans for public contracting or the Implementation of Forest Management activities by public contractors be included as one credit for each hour spent developing the plans and administering the implementation of the plans on the landscape?*

No. You can include 12 hours just for being a practicing forester, recognizing that learning also happens on the job. However the bulk of the continuing competency credits are intended for training and education aimed at staying current with new information, developments, and thinking. The development of an Operating Plan is a job function, and the pathway to do that job is well established. It flows from a higher level strategic Forest Management Plan, and generally does not involve innovation on a day to day basis.

*Would you agree with the claiming the following forestry-related subscriptions at the following credit hours? (under Category 2, as listed in Appendix 2)*

- 1) Scientific Journal of Arboriculture and Urban Forestry - 6 issues per year from the International Society of Arboriculture. (credits 2 per issue = total of 12 credits).*
- 2) Arborist News Magazine - 6 issues per year from the International Society of Arboriculture. (1 credit per issue = total of 6 credits).*
- 3) The Prairie Arborist Magazine - 4 issues per year from the Prairie Chapter representing Sask., Alberta and Manitoba = (1/2 credit per issue = total of 2 credits).*
- 4) Tree Service Canada Newspaper - 4 papers per year from Tree Service Canada. (1/2 credit per issue = total of 2 credits).*

Yes. There's no problem using the journals and credits as listed.