

POLICY NUMBER 10: REVIEW OF PROBATIONARY WORK PRODUCTS

As part of some stipulated agreements between the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) and disciplined RPFs to resolve licensing cases, independent review is required of written timber harvest plans and other related documents done by the RPF while on probation before they are submitted to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Department) for review and possible approval. It is the responsibility of the RPF being disciplined to arrange for the independent review of his/her work product while on probation. It is the intent of the Board that this type of review will increase the thoroughness and completeness of the work that goes into professional documents prepared by the RPF. To help guide those involved in this review and reporting, the Board suggests that the following standards may be useful to achieve the rehabilitation objective:

Products to be reviewed

All current forms of specified documents should be reviewed prior to the original submission to the Department. This includes, but is not limited to standard timber harvesting plans, emergency timber harvesting plans, modified timber harvesting plans, and any other type(s) of plans involving timber harvest or major amendments to any of these documents the Board may create in the future. Depending on the nature of the case, this review may also apply to Confidential Archaeological Addenda, stocking reports and other THP related documents.

RPF Reviewer

Must be a Registered Professional Forester or other appropriate professional who is involved in the timber harvest plan process, either in reviewing or writing THPs, and who has a working knowledge of current timber harvest plan regulations. The RPF must have a valid license to practice forestry, not be subject to any open disciplinary case concerning their RPF license, and must not have any conflict of interest in the performance of professional review. Those RPFs directly involved in the regulatory review of the specific plan (either in an office or on the ground) after submission to the Department shall not be involved in this prior review of the plan.

Review

A Stipulated Agreement may specify that review of probationary work products include an office check of the completeness of information that went into the specified document(s), and the presentation of that information in the document(s). When an office check is specified in the stipulation, the RPF under probation is not prevented from getting the reviewer to evaluate the document, or portions of the document in the field. Field evaluation of professional practice may also be specified as part of a Stipulated Agreement particularly where professional failures by the respondent RPF in the course of fieldwork have been specifically identified.

The review of the document should include what sources were used to obtain information, the documentation the RPF has of those sources, and how it is presented. For example, where the list of adjacent landowner names and addresses for Public Notice was obtained, where it is documented, and how is it presented in the plan. It is not expected of the reviewer to check whether the names are spelled correctly or that the addresses are accurate. A guide for the reviewer is the THP checklist originally developed by California Licensed Foresters Association, or other appropriate documents. Completing the checklist would provide an adequate review of the plan, combined with assessment of adequacy of source information.

REAUTHORIZED

1/10/07

Should reviewer find deficiencies in the document being reviewed, suggestions should be made to the RPF to correct problem(s) before submitting the document to the Department. It is not the responsibility of the reviewer to make sure that those corrections are made, but rather it is up to the RPF. A second review of document before submission is up to the RPF, and is not mandatory.

Where other resource professionals are required to provide specific input on any document, as specified in a Stipulated Agreement, the RPF Reviewer shall ensure that this input was received and the input appropriately utilized.

Certification of Review

The reviewer shall document and certify in writing to the PFEC that a review of a specific document has occurred. A letter to the PFEC shall be sent within 7 days of the review, stating what was reviewed, what the results of that review were, and if reviewer believes the document met generally acceptable professional standards for timber harvest plans documents submitted to the Department.

Costs

The respondent RPF shall be solely responsible for the cost of independent review of his/her probationary work product.

Other Work Products

Other work plans or documents reporting work done by or under the supervision of the RPF may require independent RPF review of those work products during probation. If so, that review shall be specifically addressed on a case by case basis in the stipulated agreement.