

2011 RFT Registration Exam

ASSOCIATION OF
BC FOREST PROFESSIONALS

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This package contains examples of good answers that were submitted for the 2011 RFT registration exam. Although the answers were chosen as the two better answers submitted in 2011, take note of the score each answer received and be advised that answers may contain errors. Some questions in this package may not have been answered by enough examinees to provide examples of at least one or two good answers.

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Question 1 (Short answer)

There are four practice areas available to technologists.

- a) What are the practice areas? (2 marks)
- b) What are the enabling documents that define, describe, and explain the extent of the practice areas? (3 marks)
- c) For each practice area, provide an example of an activity that requires registration as a registered forest technologist and an example of an activity that does not require registration as a forest technologist. (5 marks)

Answer 1 (scored 10)

The four areas of practice available to an RFT, they are;

- (a)
- 1 Forest Measurements
 - 2 Silviculture
 - 3 Forest Operations
 - 4 Forest Protection

(b) The enabling documents are;

- Foresters Act
- ABCFP Bylaws
- Scope of Practice

(c) Forest Measurements

- Submission of cruise plan – RFT req
- Timber cruising – Non-member

Silviculture

- Reporting on silviculture activities & results – RFT requirement
- Collecting silviculture survey information – Non-member

Forest Operations

- Road Permit Applications – RFT req
- Road construction – Non-member

Forest Protection

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- Prescribing burning prescriptions – RFT req
- Fire suppression – Non-member

Answer 2 (scored 10)

a) What are the practice areas?

There are four areas of practice defined in Bylaw 6.1.2 and the Scope of Practice for RFTs Guideline. These areas are:

1. Forest Measurements – Forest measurements refers to the knowledge and skills required to measure and describe a forest resource. Professional aspects of this area of practice include the planning, execution, supervision, and monitoring to meet forest management objectives. Generally, forest measurements refers to mensuration, biometrics, photo interpretation, and mapping.
2. Silviculture – Silviculture refers to the knowledge required of an RFT to prepare and carry out stand-level prescriptions to produce the desired stand conditions. Examples of silviculture activities are silviculture operations (site preparation, tree planting, and thinning, for example), nursery operations, site assessments, crop-planning, and monitoring the stand.
3. Forest Operations – forest operations includes all activities associated with road building and harvesting, such as data collection and development of site plans, developing road and cutting permits, and supervising road construction and harvest operations.
4. Forest Protection – this area of practice refers to the knowledge and skills related to insects, disease, natural hazards, fire, and forest fuels. Examples of activities in this area of practice include preparing wildfire management plans, recognizing forest insects and diseases, and forecasting insect, disease, and natural events at both the stand and landscape level.

b) The enabling documents that define, describe, and explain the extent of the practice areas include:

1. Foresters Act, Section 20: Unauthorized Practice. The Act describes that an RFT may only practice professional forestry “to the extent consistent with their education, training, and experience,” independently if they are working within the four areas of practice described in the Bylaws, or if carrying out or supervising work designed by an RPF, or if they are working under the supervision of a professional forester.
2. ABCFP Bylaw 6: Membership Rights and Obligations. This bylaw furthers the Foresters Act explanation of an RFT’s scope of practice by defining the four general practice areas: forest measurements, silviculture, forest operations, and forest protection.
3. ABCFP Guideline on the Scope of Practice for RFTs. This document is a guideline for RFTs that demand that RFTs are responsible and accountable for their work. It outlines the role of

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RFTs in the forestry team, and provides two considerations for determining if an activity is within an RFT's scope of practice: a) the project must be within the 4 areas of practice, and must be achievable using the education, experience, and training of the RFT.

4. ABCFP Guideline – Supervision – This document describes what is meant by the word “supervision” in Section 2 of the Foresters Act. Section 2 allows a person to engage in professional forestry if they are under the supervision of a forest professional. The guideline can assist in determining what constitutes appropriate supervision by an RPF for an RFT working outside their scope of practice.
- c)

Forest Measurements

An activity that requires registration as an RFT is the design of a timber cruise. This activity falls within the four areas of practice, and requires the technical expertise of a person who has formal forest management education and additional training and experience in timber cruising. A non-member would be able to carry out measurements in a cruise plot that are based on procedures in the cruising manual and does not require professional judgement.

Silviculture - An activity requiring and RFT is analyzing data collected in an area requiring free-growing confirmation and making recommendations for further treatments based on that data. An activity that may be carried out by a non-member is tree-planting – this position is procedure-based and requires no professional judgement.

Forest Operations - An activity requiring registration as an RFT includes approving a road system, by signing and sealing the road site plan. A non-member would complete lay-out of the roads.

Forest Protection - An RFT would be required to analyze data for and make recommendations for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. A non-member would be able to carry out work identified in the CWPP, such as pruning, if that work did not require professional judgement, and that followed a specific plan or procedure

Question 2 (Short answer)

- a) What is a silviculture system? List the silviculture systems that are used in BC. (2 marks)
- b) What is a harvesting system? List the harvesting systems in use in BC. (2 marks)
- c) What should your professional considerations be in determining what silviculture systems and harvesting systems could be applied. (6 marks)

Question 3 (Essay)

Due diligence is one of the cornerstones of professional reliance.

- a) In your own words, define due diligence. (3 marks)

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b) As a forest professional, how can you demonstrate due diligence in ONE of the following scenarios? You must answer (1) or (2) but not both. Be specific as to the considerations at each stage.

(7 marks)

- (1) Taking a block from the "Forest Stewardship Plan stage" through "Layout" to "Cruising" to "Appraisal" (and any other necessary stages) through to the Cutting Permit Application; or
- (2) From harvest completion to "free growing."

Question 4 (Essay)

As an RFT you have an obligation for safety.

- a) What bylaws and guidelines explain this obligation?
- b) Select a practice area, and for that practice area describe measures that you can undertake to meet professional standards that demonstrate your commitment to safety, and to the cultivation of a safety culture

(6 marks)

(4 marks)

Answer 1 (scored 9)

As an RFT, my obligation for safety is outlined in the ABCFP Bylaws and Guidelines. The Bylaws that outline this obligation are:

- Bylaw 11.3.10 – The responsibility of a member to the public is “to have proper regard in all work for the safety of others.”
- Bylaw 12.7.1 – “Members maintain safe work practices and consider the safety of workers and others in the practice of professional forestry.”

Safety issues are considered in the Standards of Professional Practice Guideline. In 2010, this Guideline was updated to include Safety as a Professional Standard. The guideline explains safety to be the responsibility of all forestry team members. Forest professionals must cultivate a safety culture – this is part of upholding the public interest. The guideline describes measures that a forest professional can take to ensure that they are upholding the safety standard.

- b) Practice Area – Forest Protection. Working in forest protection requires the consideration of safety in all aspects of work. As an RFT working in a management position in the Wildfire Management Branch, safety is a daily consideration. Working with wildfires and the equipment associated with fire prevention and suppression is an inherently dangerous job. As a manager, I must work towards reducing the hazards and risks of the job, and encouraging a culture of safety among my staff and peers.

An important aspect of my professional duties towards safety is having a good working knowledge of safety requirements and practices. I don't need to be a safety expert, but I do need to consider

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safety as part of my work. I must understand current safety legislation, including the OHS regulation, the Workers Compensation Act, and safety or risk reduction requirements in the Wildfire Act and regulation. If I don't know what the law says, I need to know how to access that information. Websites and phone numbers to access include the WorkSafe BC website and phone, and the BC Forest Safety Council website.

A major component of workplace safety is a safety plan. I need to ensure that a professional quality safety plan is in place, and that all of my colleagues and staff, and myself, are trained in this plan. I need to learn what safety plan is already in place, and I need to assess it for completeness and practicality. A good tool for this is the Safe Companies Toolkit, which goes through the steps of creating a safety plan. The plan must include:

- roles and responsibilities of staff and the employer,
- regular safety meetings, such as tailgate meetings,
- training needs for workers, such as safe operating procedures around helicopters,
- procedures and checklists for safe work,
- record-keeping systems
- equipment checks, including chainsaws, trucks, and pumps,
- communication guidelines, including proper radio use and chain-of-command.

I would carry out safety drills to keep the team well prepared. The plan would be regularly reviewed by all people who are affected by it.

As a professional, I need to carry out a due diligence program to ensure that I am meeting the professional standard for safety. The program would include participating in discussion groups and committees regarding safety, maintaining a circle of colleagues and peers to talk safety with, and sharing safety knowledge with my colleagues and peers.

Above all, I must set an example for forest safety, that inspires workers to work at the highest level of safety possible.

Answer 2 (scored 9)

Safety is a major priority for all of us who work in the forest sector. There are many bylaws and guidelines that help to ensure that all practicing members are aware of their obligations. Bylaw 11.3.10-to have proper regard in all work for the safety of others, Bylaw 12.2.3 Competent members exercise appropriate judgement and discretion with due care. Other Bylaws that help to promote a safe environment include 11.3.7, 11.4.6, and 11.5.4 although these Bylaws don't make reference to safety specifically members who only practice in those fields where he/she is competent and are aware of and informed of current issues and development in their field of practice are indeed helping to promote safe work environments. To help members better understand these obligations and help to ensure that the practicing members are meeting their due diligence they produced Guidelines for Interpretation-ABCFP code of ethics and Standards of Professional Practice. These guidelines are invaluable as they help to ensure members understand the intent of the bylaws, expanding on and

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interpreting and also providing useful scenarios so you are able to see how to apply the bylaws in different situations.

You are in charge of implementing a silviculture prescription for juvenile spacing. Describe measures I can undertake to meet professional standards that demonstrate my commitment to safety and the cultivations of a safety culture.

The first day of the contract I would be there to conduct a pre-work meeting. Although I want to use this time to ensure workers are clear on how to implement the prescription this is a great opportunity to demonstrate safety is a priority. To do this I would check to ensure that workers had proper certification (ie. Fallers tickets if trees >6 inches were required to be felled) I would check to ensure that all workers had proper personal protective equipment (PPE), that there were proper check in procedures and emergency response plan in place. I would require that the first aid attendant be identified and that others know where he/she will be working. I would make sure that contractor had proper signage up indentifying active work area. I would inspect the first aid gear and make sure they had the required equipment and that it was in good working order. Depending on the amount of people on site and ETV might be required. After this I would proceed to convey any known hazards and areas of concern. This could include steep rocky terrain, danger trees, or identifying wildlife (bear) that had been noticed during previous site visits. I would encourage the contract supervisor to use daily tailgates and to document everything that was discussed. If in the unfortunate event there was an accident, or hopefully just and incident, encourage workers to share what happened, debrief and hopefully you can take these learnings and apply them so you might be able to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future.

Some off site ways that I could demonstrate my commitment to safety would be keeping current with the applicable legislation, such as Worksafe BC and Occupational Health and Safety regulations. I would make effort to keep current in my field through reading applicable publications and I would work to form a circle of peers and mentors where I could share experiences and learn from theirs.

Question 5 (Essay)

- a) How do you know when you are working outside of the bounds of your competence? (5 marks)
- b) What options do you have to address this situation? (5 marks)

Answer 1 (scored 9)

- a) Competence can be defined as “properly qualified; answering all requirements; having sufficient capacity, ability, or authority; possessing the requisite physical, mental, natural, or legal qualifications; sufficient for the necessities of the work” (Standards of Professional Practice: Guidelines for Interpretation). Bylaw 12.2 defines three components of competence – maintaining sufficient knowledge, ensuring that work is complete, correct, and clear, and exercising judgement and discretion with due care. Competence is demonstrated when all three components are upheld.

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As an RFT, the bounds of my competence are set by my education, training, and experience. I can be certain that I am working outside the bounds of my competence if I am working on a project that I have limited or no formal education, training, or experience with. If I am unable to meet the standards of professional practice outlined in Bylaw 12 and the Guideline for Interpretation, I am working outside the bounds of my competence. My confidence in carrying out a task also indicates my competence. For example, if I am an RFT experienced in management of forest insects, and I have been asked to carry out a Terrain Stability Field Assessment (which I have never done before), I would likely be working outside my competence if I accepted the assignment.

- b) As a forest professional, I must be diligent in expanding the bounds of my competence. This will minimize problems with working outside of the bounds of my competence, and generally improve myself as a professional. To address the problem of working outside the bounds of my competence in a broad sense, I need to participate in continuing education (such as reading professional journals and participating in workshops), be active locally and provincially, keep accurate records of work I've completed, carry out high quality work, maintain a network of knowledgeable peers, and participate in volunteer activities.

To ensure that I am working in a competent manner, I must only accept and undertake jobs for which I am qualified and capable of successfully completing. The goal is to continually expand my competence. In situations where I have limited training or experience, I should strive to undertake the work with assistance, rather than decline the job, so long as I am not compromising the professional quality of the work.

For example, if I have been requested to carry out a TSFA (which I have limited experience with), I would address the situation the following way: First, I would speak to my employer or client, stating that I have limited experience with TSFAs, and that I may require training, or I may wish to work with the assistance of a professional who is experienced in carrying out TSFAs. Next, I would engage in some research on the project. I would go to the site requiring the TSFA and determine if it is a simple task that I can carry out on my own. I would also review the TSFA process. For the parts of the project that I am not competent in, I would ask for assistance from a qualified professional. I would carry out the work and prepare a report, checking to ensure that it is free of errors, is scientifically and technically sound, attempts to balance the interests of the public and the client, meets all required legislation, and upholds the principles of forest stewardship. I would ask a qualified professional to review and comment on the TSFA and incorporate his suggestions into the TSFA. Finally, I would sign off on the plan.

I would decline assignments that would require me to engage in extensive training, that would take an unreasonable length of time for me to complete, or that would create an unreasonable expense to my client. In these situations, I would recommend to the client a qualified professional who could carry out the task. I would also sign up for a training session or engage in a mentorship pertaining to the area of incompetence, if it is an area that I wish to increase my participation, or if it is an area that I must be competent in to meet the demands of my employer or my profession.

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Question 6 (Essay)

You are supervising road construction on potentially hazardous terrain. The road design has been approved by a qualified professional. The contractor has identified a bench downslope that he feels is more stable and a less costly location and wants to move the road location to the bench. What are your professional obligations with regards to this change in road location?

(10 marks)

Question 7 (Essay)

You have been receiving work-related emails from a fellow professional that you feel are insulting, are not of a professional quality, and call into question the professional behaviour of your fellow ABCFP member. How would you deal with these concerns?

(10 marks)

Answer 1 (scored 8)

Before taking any action with my co-worker, I would review the issue myself. I need to determine that this person is acting in an unprofessional manner. I would review the Foresters Act, bylaws, and guidelines and determine if my co-worker was in contravention of these documents. In particular, I would ask myself if this person was “engaged in conduct unbecoming of a member” (Foresters Act Section 22), or if he unfairly criticized my work or attempted to injure my reputation (Bylaw 11.6.2). Once I’d determined that my co-worker was acting unprofessionally or in an insulting manner, I would meet with him. In this meeting, I would explain my viewpoints. The purpose of the meeting would be to determine what the problem is, why it exists, and how we can work together to solve it. In all conversations, I will use respectful regard towards my fellow professional, and act in a constructive manner.

If, after both of us have explained ourselves and listened to the other, and no solution has been reached, I would identify another person to involve in the conflict resolution. This would be a respected peer who has good conflict resolution skills. The three of us would meet and again attempt to resolve the problem. I could also use the ABCFP Practice Advisory Service for advice.

If we still can’t come to agreement or a solution, I would bring the issue to the employer. The employer likely has an internal conflict resolution policy, and may be able to resolve the problem with us.

If a solution has still not been reached, I would file a complaint with the ABCFP against this member. This action is the “last resort” method – the ABCFP has limited resources for conflict resolution, and their resources should only be used when all other avenues have been exhausted. However, I am obliged by Bylaw 11.4.3.1 “to inform the Council immediately in writing of the particulars,” if I have found my co-worker to be acting unprofessionally and I am unable to resolve the matter with him. I would include in the letter to the registrar an account of all the steps I’ve taken to address the problem, and the reasons why I believe my colleague was acting unprofessionally, quoting applicable legislation and guidelines.

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Answer 2 (scored 8.5)

As an RFT I have responsibilities to the public, the profession, the client and other members. In this case I believe that by sending me insulting and non professional quality emails this professional is breaching the ABCFP Bylaws and the Foresters act, more specifically his/her responsibilities to the profession and other members.

My professional obligations under the code of ethics (11.4.3.1) is to raise the matter with the other member. If this professional was a co-worker I would then inform my employer and try again to resolve this issue. If this individual was not a co-worker I would consult another professional. In both cases I would still consult another professional before moving forward. If this issue was not resolved or I was unable to raise the issue with the professional I would inform the council immediately in writing including particulars. (Bylaw 11.4.3.2).

During a meeting with the individual I would inform them of my concerns and remind him/her of the obligations of a forestry professional. I would explain that I believed that the emails were un-professional and unbecoming of a forest professional (Bylaw 11.4.3), that the emails potentially unfairly criticized myself (11.6.2) and that a member who violates the code may be subject to one or more of the remedial actions authorized under the foresters act (Bylaw 11.7). I would remind him/her of my responsibility to make a complaint under the Foresters Act (Section 22(1)(b)) in light of his/her conduct which I perceive as unbecoming of a member. In addition to the Foresters Act and the Code of Ethics violations this individual is also breaching the integrity standard contained in the Standards of Professional Practice (12.4.1). It states that members in private or professional practice or other outside activities must always conduct themselves honorably and in ways which sustain and enhance their professional integrity and the integrity of the profession as a whole.

Through this whole situation I must be reminded to follow the bylaws and the Foresters Act myself. One bylaw I must follow in addition to the ones noted is bylaw 12.5.1, due diligence. I must exercise due diligence in being prudent and doing all work consistent and careful attention. In this case it would mean documenting in writing conversations I have had and keeping all email or other correspondence pertinent to this matter.

In conclusion would do all I could to resolve the matter with the member as it may be a simple understanding. If it was un-resolvable I would use the avenues listed above to ensure that members registered by the ABCFP act according to the Foresters Act and the Bylaws.