

OPFA STANDARD—INDIGENOUS PEOPLES,¹ LANDS & RESOURCES

Principle: Managing forest resources requires Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) to understand Aboriginal and treaty rights, as outlined in section 35 of Canada’s Constitution Act, how those rights may be affected by forestry operations, how Indigenous knowledge can contribute to sustainable forest management, and the responsibility of RPFs to recognize and affirm Aboriginal and treaty rights and respect Indigenous knowledge systems.

Demonstrable Competencies and examples of some subjects that meet the competency

A candidate for certification shall provide evidence of the ability to:

OPFA.1 Demonstrate knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, their worldviews, knowledge, governance (including protocols for engagement), and practices related to lands and resources.

- Who are Indigenous Peoples?
- Indigenous Peoples and colonization: history and impacts
- Indigenous worldviews: historical and contemporary
- Importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Protocols of engagement with Indigenous groups
- Personal and systemic biases in forestry

OPFA.2 Describe the nature of Aboriginal and treaty rights, including interpretations of Supreme Court of Canada rulings both by governments and by Indigenous communities and organizations, explaining their relevance to forest development, management and conservation.

- Aboriginal and treaty rights: historical and modern definitions
- Nature and definition of Crown’s rights and responsibilities
- Evolving concepts and principles of Supreme Court of Canada rulings on Aboriginal and treaty rights
- Recognition of differing interpretations of rulings

OPFA.3 Identify how the roles and responsibilities of actors at the local, provincial, federal, international levels and private sector and non-governmental organizations affect Indigenous Peoples’ forest-based rights, including those on Crown and private lands and Indigenous traditional territories.

- Impacts stemming from development affecting Indigenous Peoples’ rights
- Principles of the duty to consult and accommodate; free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)

- Indigenous Peoples’ roles and responsibilities in consultation
- Nature of various agreements, stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples involved and the implications for Aboriginal and treaty rights, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) and Truth & Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 57
- International and domestic initiatives related to Indigenous Peoples and the environment

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¹Terminology is always evolving, complicated and often political. We use the term “Indigenous Peoples” (capital I, capital P). This term was first used in the international arena, but its use is becoming increasingly popular in Canada, with some Indigenous Peoples stating their preference for its use (see Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-terminology-guidelines-for-usage>). We use the term “Aboriginal and treaty rights” when referring to the Constitution Act, 1982, s. 35. Canada’s Dept. of Justice explains the importance of capitalizing Aboriginal and First Nations and has adopted these capitalized terms in Canadian laws. The plural on Peoples indicates that there is one more than one Indigenous Nation in Canada. Indigenous communities promote their recognition as “Nations” and will often call for a “Nation-to-Nation” relationship. Note that in Ontario, the Forest Management Planning Manual, 2017 refers “First Nations and Métis”.