

# Introduction to Timber Cruising

8th edition — Instruction Guide



**Forest  
Professionals**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

*Responsible for registering and regulating British Columbia's forest professionals*

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# Introduction to Timber Cruising Accreditation and FMP

## Timber Cruising

Timber cruising is a profession primarily driven by the need to obtain consistent and accurate volume estimations, species composition, stand quality, and value of the timber resource. Field sampling and assessment are the critical tasks conducted by professional cruisers. The field sampling is based on standard mensuration practices found within the forest industry, while the assessments are dependent on a timber cruiser's ability to estimate stand volume and value.

The career path of a timber cruiser is forged by the cruiser's ability to continually learn sampling techniques using standard conventions and gaining local knowledge. The cruiser must learn through experience. The knowledge of timber cruising is traditionally passed on from mentor to student in a real work environment. This experiential learning is the key to cruiser competency. In addition to learning through experience, there are various cruising seminars available in the spring of each year.

The accreditation guide describes the process whereby qualified cruisers may have their experience and knowledge recognized through a competency-based evaluation process.

## The Forest Measurements Panel

The FMP works under the oversight of the FPBC's Credentials Committee for the purpose of evaluating and recommending applicants for accreditation as ATCs or ATEs.

The FMP established the process whereby qualified cruisers may have their training, experience, and knowledge recognized through a competency-based evaluation. This evaluation process is described in the Timber Cruiser's Log.

## General Description of the Cruising Accreditation Process

There are four levels to the cruising accreditation process:

**Level 1:** Compasser. This requires three months of cruising-related experience, but compassers do not apply for accreditation at Level 1. Level 1 is a prerequisite for attaining Levels 2, 3, and 4.

**Level 2:** Cruiser in Training. This requires three months completion at Level 1 and six months at Level 2 for a total of nine months of cruising-related experience. A Cruiser Candidate does not apply for accreditation at Level 2. Level 2 is a prerequisite for attaining Levels 3 and 4.

**Level 3:** Accredited Timber Cruiser. This requires three months completion at Level 1, six months at Level 2, plus an additional 15 months at Level 3, for a total of 24 months of cruising-related experience. The successful applicant would receive a Level 3 Competency Certificate with authority to practice cruising-related aspects of professional forestry as stated in writing by the FPBC registrar.

**Level 4:** Accredited Timber Evaluator. This requires three months completion at Level 1, six months at Level 2, 15 months at Level 3, plus an additional 36 months at Level 4 for a total of 60 months of cruising-related experience. The successful registrant would receive a Level 4 Competency Certificate with authority to practice cruising-related aspects of professional forestry as stated in writing by the FPBC registrar.

## **What is the purpose of the Timber Cruiser's Log?**

The Timber Cruiser's Log (the log) is a record of the training experience and knowledge that a cruiser must attain to be formally recognized as an ATC or ATE. The log allows you to demonstrate your competencies to the FMP and your employer(s). The log contains a cruiser diary as a useful tool to help you record all types of cruising experience.

## **Accreditation Eligibility**

Individuals who wish to be accredited must demonstrate their competency as a timber cruiser. This requires completion of each level of the log and any other criteria as set by the FMP.

## **The Period of Accreditation**

Accreditation will be granted until November 30. Accreditation will automatically continue for practising RPF or RFT registrants who complete the renewal process outlined in Bylaw 5-15(2).

## **Maintaining Your Accreditation in Good Standing**

Refer to Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct and the limitation on practice as directed by FPBC.

FPBC requires each ATC/ATE to demonstrate continuing competency. The Professional Governance Act (PGA), Code, and Standards of Ethical & Professional Conduct impose a duty for registrants to consistently pursue appropriate professional development to ensure continuing competency.

## **Cancellation of Accreditation**

The FMP may recommend cancelling accreditation if it was made in error or under false pretenses or if registrants fail to complete all of the required steps to renew their annual registration.

## **Appeal Process**

An applicant or struck registrant whose accreditation has been refused or revoked may provide written notice to the FMP outlining their request for a second review or reinstatement.

## **Reinstatement of Accreditation**

Any person whose FPBC registration has been cancelled in good standing may have their accreditation reinstated if all conditions set by the FMP have been met and all outstanding FPBC reinstatement requirements are fulfilled.

A person seeking reinstatement of accreditation due to non-payment of fees must reapply for accreditation, and will have their qualifications assessed against current requirements.

*1. The competency certificate is issued under the authority of FPBC bylaw 6 (technical occupations, certification scheme and limited licenses). The Certificate is issued under the authority of FPBC bylaw 6-2 where the certificate holder is permitted to practice aspects of professional forestry as stated in writing by the FPBC. This means that a Level 3 ATC and a Level 4 ATE who are associate registrants may only practice professional forestry within the scope specified by the FPBC.*

# Professional Conduct

As FPBC registrants, ATCs or ATEs must conduct themselves in accordance with FPBC's Bylaw 9, *Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct* and the Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct

## Accreditation Guide

The following functions, education, experience, and cruising level definitions are provided to clarify the terms used on the respective accreditation forms. Please read through this guide to ensure you have full knowledge of the requirement for accreditation.

### Level 1 – Compasser

*(Compassers do not qualify for accreditation when working at this level)*

#### Function

A Compasser is an entry-level position suitable for forestry workers interested in pursuing a career in timber cruising. The Compasser should work under the supervision of an ATC, an ATE, or a practising FPBC registrant and assists in field data collection. A Compasser does not practice professional forestry.

#### Experience Requirements

Three months appropriate field experience at this level and an aptitude in forestry are key attributes required to fulfill this position.

#### Experiential Learning

All candidates for Level 1 endorsement are encouraged to enhance their knowledge base through active work and participating in courses, such as:

- field orienteering
- survival first aid
- cruiser association workshops

#### Endorsement Criteria

A Compasser must meet the following requirements to be endorsed by an ATC, ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF to complete Level 1:

- the ability to function as a Compasser with minimal supervision.
- completion of all competencies as described in this document.
- completion of three months appropriate field experience at this level.
- conducting personal actions in a professional manner consistent with the PGA, bylaws, and FPBC board resolutions.

#### 1.1 Equipment Knowledge

A Compasser must be able to demonstrate the ability to appropriately operate and maintain:

- a hand compass,
- a diameter tape, including the replacement of a tape refill,
- an increment borer, including oiling, and sharpening,

- an axe,
- a horizontal distance measuring device,
- a vertical distance measuring device.

### 1.2 Field Procedures

A Compasser is able to demonstrate how to:

- adjust declination settings, set directional bearings on a hand compass, and navigate with minimum supervision.
- measure field distances, including the calculation of slope correction to obtain horizontal distance.
- establish a plot centre and reference points.
- determine the diameter, at breast height, of a tree.
- determine the breast height age.
- assist the cruiser in the measurement of tree heights.
- communicate field information clearly and effectively.
- conduct tasks in a safe and appropriate manner.

### 1.3 Field Knowledge

A Compasser is able to demonstrate how to:

- differentiate between magnetic, grid, and true north, and set a navigational course and bearing from a map.
- recognize and identify common tree species found within the general work area.
- recognize and identify common pathological indicators of decay for trees, such as fork/crook, scar/frost crack, dead/broken top, conk, blind conk, dwarf mistletoe, and rotten branch.
- recognize and identify common tree pests and other damage agents.
- read maps – recognize, basic map-related features, including scale, orientation, and topography (contours).
- be aware of the appropriate regulatory and occupational requirements.

## Level 2 – Cruiser in Training

*(Cruisers do not qualify for accreditation when working at this level)*

### Function

A Cruiser in Training is an intermediate working position suitable for forestry workers interested in pursuing a career in timber cruising. At this interim level it is likely that the forestry worker intends to advance to an ATC level.

A Cruiser in Training is able to function as a secondary Timber Cruiser, having limited responsibility while under supervision of an ATC, ATE, or a practising registrant. This position allows for development and growth of a cruiser's field abilities. A Cruiser in Training does not practise professional forestry.

### Experience Requirements

Nine months of cumulative field experience, including six months at this level (one month can be appropriate office experience (see 2.4 below), plus the prerequisite minimum of three months at Level 1.

### Experiential Learning

In addition to Level 1 experiential learning, all candidates for Level 2 endorsement are encouraged to enhance their knowledge-base through active work and cruising seminars.

### **Endorsement Criteria**

A Cruiser in Training must meet the following requirements to be endorsed by an ATC, ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF to complete Level 2:

- ability to function as a cruiser with supervision.
- completion of six months appropriate field experience at this level (as an option, one month can be completed with appropriate office experience (refer to 2.4 below).
- competent with all functions identified in Levels 1 and 2.
- can consistently demonstrate the competence and ability to pass a formal check cruise.

### **2.1 Equipment Knowledge**

In addition to Level 1 equipment knowledge, a Cruiser in Training must be able to demonstrate the ability to appropriately operate and maintain equipment, such as:

- a clinometer and/or hypsometer or electronic height measuring device.
- a prism and/or relaskop.
- a steel/fibreglass or equivalent measuring tape and a nylon chain.
- a two-way radio and/or satellite phone
- GPS unit.

### **2.2 Field Procedures**

In addition to Level 1 field procedures, a cruiser in training is able to demonstrate how to:

- adjust declination settings, set directional bearings on a hand compass, and navigate without supervision.
- determine the breast height age and total age of a tree.
- determine site index.

With emphasis on how to:

- determine tree length through measurement and/or estimation.
- use a prism and/or relaskop and plot radius factor or diopter calculations to establish variable radius and fixed area plots.
- estimate volume per hectare.
- record accurate field notes including timber type, topography, and tree quality information.
- record and communicate clearly the identification, collection, and collation of the field data.
- conduct tasks in a safe and appropriate manner.

### **2.3 Field Knowledge**

In addition to Level 1 field knowledge, a cruiser in training is able to demonstrate how to:

- recognize, identify, and record known pathology for trees, with distinctions made between biotic, abiotic, and other sources of decay.
- recognize, identify, and record tree classes with knowledge of the associated risk group classifications and their effects on percent decay.
- recognize and record common tree pests and other damage agents.
- able to determine photo and photo-to-map scales where applicable.



- determine field location through navigation by using two or more identifiable points relating to both the base map and aerial/ortho-photograph.
- use legal survey plans and notes and recognize bearing trees and posts where applicable.
- be aware of GPS functions and their appropriate use (where applicable).

## 2.4 Office Procedures

As an option, a cruiser in training can assist with the following types of office procedures, which can contribute to a maximum of one month of Level 2 experience:

- preparation of a cruise plan map to a specified standard.
- pre-stratification of timber types.
- determination of the CV (co-efficient of variation) through the calculation of standard deviation and the mean to determine the sampling intensity for a given sampling error objective.
- produce an adjusted cruise map including accurate placement of the cruise strip locations, photo to map ties and confirmed timber type lines.
- edit field data and prepare it for input to a compilation program.
- determine volume per hectare and stems per hectare (where applicable).
- area calculation techniques.

## Level 3 – Accredited Timber Cruiser

*(Cruisers may apply for accreditation upon completion of this level)*

### Function

An Accredited Timber Cruiser (ATC) is an operational working level suitable for forestry workers interested in a timber cruising career. At this level, a cruiser is capable of working with minimal supervision and is responsible for supervising and mentoring trainees.

An associate registrant ATC practices aspects of professional forestry as stated in the limitation on practice as directed by FPBC.

### Experience Requirements

Twenty-four months cumulative field experience (as an option, may also include a maximum of three months office experience), including 15 months at this level, plus the prerequisite minimum of six months at Level 2, and a minimum of three months at Level 1.

### Experiential Learning

In addition to Level 1 and 2 experiential learning, all candidates for accreditation are encouraged to enhance their knowledge base through active work and participating in cruising seminars.

### Endorsement Criteria

An ATC must meet the following requirements to be endorsed by an ATC, ATE, practising RFT or practising RPF to complete Level 3:

- the ability to function as a cruiser with minimal supervision.
- completion of 15 months appropriate experience at this level.
- competent with all functions identified in Levels 1, 2 and 3.
- can consistently demonstrate the competence and ability to pass a formal check cruise.

## 3.1 Field Procedures

In addition to Level 1 and 2 field procedures, an ATC is able to demonstrate how to:

- estimate volume per hectare from variable and fixed area plots.
- determine basal area and species composition.
- conduct field training and auditing for levels 1 and 2 - Compasser and Cruiser in Training.

### **3.2 Field Knowledge**

In addition to Level 1 and 2 field knowledge, an ATC is able to demonstrate how to:

- awareness of alternate sampling techniques including: probe line traverses, stump cruises, and transect lines.
- awareness of applicable quality assurance standards.

### **3.3 Office Procedures**

As an option, an ATC may be able to carry out the following types of office procedures which can contribute to a maximum of three months of Level 3 experience:

- determine timber types through photo interpretation (or other means) and group into sampling strata.
- determine the co-efficient of variation (CV) of a stand through means of estimation or calculation.
- produce a final cruise map with accurate placement of the cruise strip locations, photo-to-map ties, and confirmed timber type lines.
- prepare cruise data for computer compilation.
- produce a post-cruise report that accurately presents the criteria requested by the client.
- manage a daily work schedule.
- conduct office training and auditing for levels 1 and 2.

### **3.4 General Knowledge**

An ATC is required to demonstrate an understanding of:

- sampling theory for variable radius plot cruising including co-efficient of variation, standard deviation and error objectives.
- the appropriate decay, waste and breakage factors for specific areas.
- log grade algorithm flowcharts at a basic level.
- computer compilation output data, including lumber recovery factors, total cull (DWB), and piece size.
- the basic principles of the appraisal system including cruise input data and their impact on calculation variables.
- recognize base map origins including, NTS, BCGS and other sources.
- understand and know the limitations of forest inventory map label information.
- be aware of timeline/efficiency scales.

## Level 4 - Accredited Timber Evaluator

### Function

An Accredited Timber Evaluator (ATE) is a senior working and/or supervisory level. It is at this level that forestry workers will make timber cruising a significant and valuable part of their careers.

At this level, a cruiser is able to organize and conduct an entire timber cruise and is responsible for training, supervising, and auditing subordinates. An associate registrant ATE practices aspects of professional forestry as stated in the limitation on practice as directed by FPBC.

### Experience Requirements

Sixty months cumulative field and office experience, including 36 months at this level, plus a minimum of 15 months at Level 3, and the prerequisite minimum of six months at Level 2, and a minimum of three months at Level 1.

### Experiential Learning

In addition to Level 1, 2, and 3 experiential learning, all candidates for accreditation are required to enhance their knowledge base through active work and participating in cruising seminars. Level 4 candidates are encouraged to maintain their work experience and take courses in alternative sampling techniques (e.g., big BAF, 3P, double sampling technique, biometrics and statistics courses, variable plot cruising, call grade net factoring, residue and waste sampling and log scaling).

### Endorsement Criteria

An ATE must meet the following requirements to be endorsed by an ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF to complete Level 4:

- the ability to function as a lead cruiser without supervision.
- completion of all competencies as described in this document.
- completion of 36 months appropriate field and office experience at this level, plus 15 months appropriate field (and as an option, a maximum of three months of office experience) at Level 3.
- competent with all functions identified in Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- can consistently demonstrate the competence and ability to pass a formal check cruise.

#### 4.1 Equipment Knowledge

An ATE must be able to demonstrate the ability to appropriately operate and maintain the same equipment as for Level 1, 2, and 3.

#### 4.2 Field Procedures

In addition to field procedures for Level 1, 2 and 3, an ATE is able to conduct field training and quality assurance for all cruising levels.

#### 4.3 Field Knowledge

In addition to Level 1, 2 and 3, an ATE is able to demonstrate how to:

- use of alternate sampling techniques, which may include probe line traverses, stump cruises, transect lines, and 3P.

#### 4.4 Office Procedures

In addition to optional office procedures for Levels 2 and 3, an ATE is able to demonstrate how to:

- prepare check cruise reports.
- co-ordinate and manage timber cruising projects.

#### 4.5 General Knowledge

In addition to general knowledge for Level 3, an ATE is required to:

- understand sampling theory for variable radius plot cruising including coefficient of variation, standard deviation, VBAR calculations, and sampling error objectives.
- ensure that appropriate decay, waste, and breakage factors for specified areas are used and understood.
- interpret log grade algorithm flowcharts at a working level.
- interpret and use computer compilation output data, including lumber recovery factors, total cull (DWB), and piece size.
- understand the principles of the appraisal system, including all cruise input data and their impact on calculation variables.
- understand the appropriate use of photo-to-map transfer device techniques, such as mono-restitution, stereo-plotting, or equivalent.
- understand area calculation techniques.
- understand the criteria and procedures for check cruising.

## Accreditation Process

The FMP has defined four levels of competency for individuals who wish to obtain accreditation as a timber cruiser. The levels are:

- Level 1 - Compasser
- Level 2 - Cruiser in Training
- Level 3 - ATC
- Level 4 - ATE

Accreditation is granted at Levels 3 and 4 only.

#### Endorsement Procedure

At each competence level, an applicant must be endorsed or endorsed by a qualified FPBC registrant. This endorsement process is the basis for assessing competency. The process relies on complete information from the applicant and the integrity and participation of the endorsing registrant(s) and references.

A cruiser must consistently demonstrate his/her competence and ability to achieve all aspects of the activities described within the competency guide.

#### Endorsing Registrant

An endorsing FPBC registrant is responsible for ensuring that the applicant has satisfactorily demonstrated all aspects of the required competencies and abilities prior to the endorsement of each level.

The endorsing registrant must be an ATC, ATE, RFT, or RPF. To endorse each level an ATC, ATE, RFT, or RPF must provide a signature and registrant number for each section within the level.

- The endorsement for Levels 1 (Compasser), 2 (Cruiser in Training) and 3 (ATC) must be completed by an ATC, ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF.
- The endorsement for Level 4 (ATE) must be completed by an ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF.

## References

The applicant must also include two Confidential Work Experience Reports (one must be from a current supervisor) obtained from persons who are in a position to provide a personal assessment of the applicant's competencies, technical abilities, work standards, and general professional character.

To act as a reference, these individuals must be practising FPBC registrants and have direct knowledge of the applicant's work experience in the capacity of a supervisor or colleague.

## Work Experience

It is important that the applicant completes the minimum requirements for field experience. The minimum requirements must be demonstrated and documented at each level to ensure their understanding of the principles and attainment of the appropriate skills. This experience is recorded in the Timber Cruiser's experience log. The minimum experience requirements for endorsement are:

- where one month experience is required or optional, 15 days of related cruising activities should be obtained.
- where three months experience is required, 45 days of related cruising activities should be obtained.
- where six months experience is required, 90 days of related cruising activities should be obtained.
- where 12 months experience is required, 180 days of field-related cruising activities should be obtained.
- an ATE must have a minimum of 36 months of related cruising experience at Level 3 and a total of 60 months combined field and office experience.

The following table provides clarification regarding the minimum time requirements for each level:

Desired Level	Minimum Time Requirements to Qualify for Each Level	Minimum Accumulated Time Requirements for Accreditation	General Role
<b>Level 1-Compasser</b>		3 months	Compass duties
<b>Level 2-Cruiser in Training</b>	6 months (as an option, 1 month can be appropriate office work)	9 months	Can take on cruising duties
<b>Level 3-ATC</b>	15 months (as an option, 3 months can be appropriate office work)	24 months	Cruising duties and supervising Compassers and Cruisers in Training
<b>Level 4-ATE</b>	36 months	60 months	Overall cruising project management and quality assurance

## Fee Schedule

There are application, annual registration, exam, and reclassification (ATC reclassifying to an ATE) fees. Refer to the [fees page](#) for more details.

Fees are subject to change by FPBC board resolution.

## Questions and Answers

The following information answers some basic questions about applying for accreditation.

### 1. *Who is eligible for accreditation?*

Applicants must have demonstrated competencies (completion of the Timber Cruiser's Log and any other requirements as determined by the FMP) to be considered for accreditation and can be non-registrants, registrants, special permit holders, or associate registrants.

### 2. *What is involved in getting accredited?*

The accreditation process is designed to recognize the value of competencies achieved through experience. The process takes into consideration an applicant's formal education credentials (an optional requirement), as well as workshops and seminars attended, and related forms of education and training. To help a cruiser develop a career path and track their progress, we provide all applicants with a Timber Cruiser's Log, experience log, and a diary. The logs are critical components of the application for accreditation.

Once you are approved for an appropriate amount of experience, you will write an appropriate coastal, Interior or provincial ATC or ATE technical exam, where a pass is 70 per cent. In addition to this exam, all non-registrants are required to complete the FPBC's online Regulation and Ethics module as part of Timber Cruiser accreditation.

### 3. *What are the levels of qualification/competency?*

To help provide a path toward accreditation, four levels of qualifications/competencies have been established. Upon completion of Levels 1-3 requirements, you may apply for accreditation as an ATC. Upon completing Level 4, you may apply for ATE accreditation.

### 4. *Who evaluates my credentials?*

All applicants are evaluated by the FMP, which is comprised of senior representatives from industry, consulting, government and education institutions.

The FMP is responsible for assessing qualifications and recommending accreditation for FPBC registrar approval. FMP reviewers will make a comprehensive assessment of your qualifications.

### 5. *Who can I use for references?*

References should be individuals working in the field of cruising who can verify your current and/or past experiences as a timber cruiser. We need to see an ATC, ATE, practising RFT, or practising RPF and your current supervisor listed as references.

Do not include personal references unless you have worked for or with them in a technical capacity.

### 6. *How are my academic credentials assessed?*

It is important that you document all forms of education and training. Include formal post-secondary education, such as graduation from technology institutes, colleges, or universities. Also document all forms of seminars, workshops, and other forms of training. While these are not mandatory requirements for accreditation, this information is useful to the FMP when evaluating the application.

*7. Do I submit a copy of the Timber Cruiser's Log?*

Yes, send applicable sections from the log at the time of applying for accreditation.

*8. How should I describe my experience?*

To achieve accreditation, the FMP requires you provide evidence of relevant progressive experience, verified by references. All experience, especially related to timber cruising, must be documented for the FMP. The timber cruiser's experience log is a tool to ensure you record all applicable types of cruising-related experience.

*9. How long does it take to get accredited?*

If your application is complete, with all required experience, it could take a couple of weeks to obtain approval to write the appropriate technical exam. Exams can be written at any time within 6 months of approval, under an FPBC invigilator. If you write the exam right away and pass it, the total process can take four weeks. If you don't have the appropriate experience or fail the exam the process will be delayed or postponed.

Be sure to go through the check list on the application form and provide all information required in your application package. An incomplete application will delay the process. It is your responsibility to provide all requested information.

*10. What happens when I get accredited?*

After the FMP recommends your accreditation and the FPBC FMP approves it, you will receive a letter of confirmation and a Timber Cruiser certificate if you are registered. If you applied as a non-registrant, you will receive a letter of confirmation, a Timber Cruiser certificate and FPBC associate registration.

*11. What if my application for accreditation is not successful?*

The FMP will provide you with reasons for its decision and may provide you with other recommendations which may include applying/writing at a later date.

*12. How long is my accreditation valid?*

Accreditation is based on the understanding that a timber cruiser continues to practise timber cruising and is able to remain competent while working within the FPBC limitation on professional forestry practice stated by the registrar. Accreditation must be renewed annually for associate registrants. Accreditation will automatically be renewed each year to practising registrants in good standing upon fulfillment of all renewal requirements outlined in Bylaw 5-15(2).

*13. Any other questions?*

If you have any other questions regarding the application process, please call the registration team or visit the [website](#).