

British Columbia: Legal Source of Quality Forest Products

naturally:wood®

British Columbia Forest Facts

APRIL 2013



British Columbia meets the needs of responsible buyers by offering a reliable source of wood and paper products from sustainable and legal sources. Its forest management regime includes skilled resource professionals, a well-established process that sets management objectives for public forests, and a comprehensive suite of laws and regulations.

Independent studies have confirmed Canada and the Province of British Columbia has some of the most rigorous forest laws in

the world, and is a leader in practicing legal and sustainable forest management. B.C.'s comprehensive regulatory and enforcement regime ensures the risk of illegal logging in B.C. is negligible. The global concern about illegal logging is reflected in recent actions such as the amended Lacey Act in the United States and the European Union's recently passed Illegal Timber Regulation.

FOREST LAWS AND REGULATIONS

About 95 per cent of British Columbia's 55 million hectares (136 million acres) of diverse forestland is publicly owned. All timber harvesting operations on these public lands must comply with the results-based *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

The Act requires forest stewardship plans demonstrate how activities will be consistent with objectives set by government for soils, timber, wildlife, water, fish, biodiversity and cultural heritage resources. Before each plan is approved by government, companies must invite and consider public and Aboriginal Peoples comments. The Act also specifies requirements related to activities such as road construction, forest health, reforestation and silviculture.

As per the Forest Act, before any logging can begin on public lands, a company must be issued a cutting permit by government, setting out the boundaries of the area approved to be harvested. Timber from both public and private lands is tracked to ensure there is no illegal harvesting and to keep track of payments to government. Possession of unmarked or incorrectly marked timber can lead to fines of up to \$500,000 and imprisonment of up to two years.

Illegal logging, especially in developing countries, is a serious global problem that undermines good governance and legal forest activities. It leads to the loss of wildlife habitat and public revenues, and is an economic disincentive to sustainable forest management. An independent academic study comparing environmental forest practice regulations in jurisdictions around the world found Canada has some of the toughest regulations backed by well-developed enforcement regimes.



By buying forest products from British Columbia, Canada consumers can be assured they are purchasing products made with wood and paper products from forests that are managed legally and sustainably.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

British Columbia has a multi-faceted compliance and enforcement regime to ensure its strict forest laws are being followed. The Ministry of Natural Resource Operations and the Ministry of Environment together have over 300 compliance and enforcement staff who make sure forest operations adhere to sustainable forest management practices and regulations.

If there is evidence laws are being broken, this can lead to investigations and enforcement

actions. Penalties for offences such as unauthorized harvesting, damaging the environment or failure to properly reforest a harvest site, can include fines from \$5,000 to \$1 million and imprisonment from six months to three years.

In addition, an independent Forest Practices Board audits the compliance of licensees and government, audits the appropriateness of government enforcement, conducts special investigations, and investigates complaints.

PRIVATE FOREST LAND

About one third of the three million hectares (7.5 million acres) of privately owned forest land in British Columbia is classified as Managed Forest, and practices must meet the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* and regulations related to soil conservation, protection of water quality, protection of fish habitat, and reforestation. All timber harvested from private lands must meet Forest Act provisions dealing with timber scaling, marking and transportation.

RELATED LEGISLATION

In addition to the public and private forest land legislation in British Columbia, numerous other pieces of provincial legislation apply to forest management activities including the *Heritage Conservation Act*, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, *Water Act* and *Wildfire Act*. In addition to provincial acts related to the management of wildlife and wildlife habitat, British Columbia must provide special consideration for species at risk under Canada's *Species at Risk Act*.

FOREST CERTIFICATION

Voluntary third-party forest certification supplements Canada's and B.C.'s comprehensive laws. British Columbia has more certified forest land than any other jurisdiction in the world, with the exception of Canada as a whole – demonstrating its commitment to world-class sustainable forest management. As of 2013, British Columbia had more than 52 million hectares (128 million acres) certified to one of three internationally recognized forest certification programs – the Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standards, the Sustainable Forest Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council.

All three programs promote principles, criteria and objectives that are viewed as the basis of sustainable forest management around the world – such as harvesting timber sustainably, replanting with native species harvested areas, conserving biological diversity and maintaining wildlife habitat, soils and water resources.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RESOURCES

Ministry of Forests, Lands & Resource Operations

www.gov.bc.ca/for/

Ministry of Environment

www.gov.bc.ca/env/

Forest Practices Board

www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/

Association of BC Forest Professionals

www.abcfp.ca/

naturally:wood

www.naturallywood.com/Resources

- Comparing British Columbia with the World (2004)
- Comparison of Selected Forest Certification Standards (2009)

LEGISLATION

British Columbia

<http://www.bclaws.ca/>

Canada

<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/MainPage>

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from the Province of British Columbia's sustainably-managed forests. This publication is part of the 'Forest Facts' series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment. Visit www.naturallywood.com for details.

naturally:wood[®]

British Columbia wood. Sustainable by nature. Innovative by design.