



Use Of Seal

Revised and Reissued

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Ontario Professional Foresters Association

(905) 877-3679

www.opfa.ca

opfa@opfa.ca

Use of Seal Guide

(additions underlined)

1. General

- a) This guide covers the use of the Professional Seal by a member of the Association.
- b) This guide replaces all previous Use of Seal Policies.

1. Enabling Legislation and Jurisdiction

Professional Foresters Act 2000 Section 53(1) states:

“The Council may pass by-laws,

34. prescribing the seal and other insignia of the Association and providing for their use;

35. requiring and governing the signing and sealing of documents and plans by members of the Association, specifying the form of seals and respecting the issuance and ownership of seals;”

The provision of seal is currently required in the Association By-laws, Section 15.2 and is subject to the O.P.F.A. Code of Ethics. Section 15.2 reads: **“The Association shall provide a Professional Seal to the members upon registration, which shall remain the property of the Association.”** The Association delegates the use of the Seal, subject to conditions set out in this policy.

3. Conditions for Use of Seal

- a) The application of the Professional Seal to a document or a portion thereof signifies that the contents conform to the Code of Ethics and professional forestry standards. Certification must take the form of the seal’s imprint, signature of the member, and current date.
- b) The Professional Seal should be applied whenever the Registered Professional Forester prepares official estimates, specifications, prescriptions, reports, plans and all other documents in his/her professional capacity.
- c) The work presented by the sealed document shall have been personally carried out by the member or shall have been carried out under the member’s “direct supervision” or review.
- d) For the meaning of “supervision”, see the Association document entitled “Scope of Practice Interpretation”. Supervision must be such that the member can reasonably monitor and accept responsibility for the work of the person being supervised. The member must also hold a certificate of registration enabling him or her to supervise the activity in question.

- e) Alterations or amendments to a document sealed by a Registered Professional Forester, whether made by the author or another individual, will immediately void the seal and signature of the Registered Professional Forester. Altered or amended documents can be re-signed and dated by the original Registered Professional Forester or another as the circumstances require.
- f) There is essentially no difference between using the R.P.F. seal on a paper document or in an electronic document. The same rules apply in both situations. The member is responsible for the use of their assigned seal in any and all formats and shall not delegate its use.

4. Implications of the Use of Seal

The Code of Ethics as identified in the Regulations under the Act requires that (in part): **“a member shall undertake only work that he or she is competent to perform by virtue of training and experience”**

This implies that members limit their practice to those areas of forestry wherein they maintain a competence by virtue of education and/or experience and do not extend their endeavors beyond the realm of competence.

A note regarding implications of the Code of Ethics and Use of Seal:

The code restricts some members use of seal for certain documents where they do not have the required competency. It is expected that members would recognize their competency limitations and would not seal and sign a document where they did not have the required competence. This is especially significant if the Association By-laws were to specify those circumstances or documents where a seal is required.

The use of the seal also has implications regarding liability and discipline. Sealing a document signifies that that the member is accepting responsibility for the contents of the document. If the seal is misused, or if the document sealed is not prepared in accordance with the standards and ethics of the profession, members could be held liable or be subject to disciplinary action.

5. Policy Administration

a) The use of the Professional Seal is subject to investigation and disciplinary action as provided in the Professional Foresters Act 2000 and the Association By-laws.

b) Each Professional Seal is the property of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association. It must be returned to the Association upon termination of membership.

6. Examples of Documents

Following are examples of documents, non-inclusive, upon which a Registered Professional Forester may use his/her Professional Seal. In each circumstance, the member shall use his/her discretion as to whether the application of the Professional Seal and signature conforms to the Professional Foresters Act, 2000, the Association By-laws, and this policy.

cost claims associated with forestry activities or programs,

forest protection plans,

forest management plans,

planting plans,

site remediation plans,

annual or long term operating plans,

appraisal of penalties for infractions under existing legislation, silvicultural plans and prescriptions,

volume surveys and estimates,

timber volume cruise plans and reports,

timber sales agreements and contracts,

letters, plans, and/or reports incorporating professional opinions and recommendations,

annual reports, and

forest audits.