

A Guide to Chain of Custody Certification for Forest Product Producers



EASTERN ONTARIO
MODEL FOREST

www.eomf.ca/eaomf/en.asp

The FSC is the only forest certification system supported by the World Wildlife Fund Canada, Sierra Club of Canada, and the National Aboriginal Forestry Association. All products that are FSC-certified contain wood or wood fibre from forests certified to the FSC's standards or material that is 100% post-consumer reclaimed or recycled material .

Forest Certification

Within a forestry context, the balance of environmental, social, and economic values is challenging. There are many competing values as depicted in *Diagram 1: Sustainable Forest Management*. There is also growing public interest in the environment and in the sustainable use of our natural resources. Now more than ever, people are asking questions about what they buy and where these products come from.

In the past, the market offered little information about forest products; where they came from, and what happened to the forest that produced them. That left a lot of unanswered questions.

In response to the growing concern surrounding forest sustainability the concept of forest certification arose. The idea was to develop a process for certifying forest management practices to a pre-determined set of standards which define sustainable forest management. Independent third party auditors evaluate forest operations to assess whether owners and/or managers meet the required standards. Forest certification ensures that forest owners, practitioners, and operators comply with established and accepted management standards. It provides assurance to forest owners, managers, operators, consumers, and the local community that the production of wood products from a certified land base does not damage the overall health of the forest, the stability of the ecosystems, or the livelihoods of local communities. Forest certification is a voluntary, market-based concept, that lets purchasers – and everyone along the supply chain – choose to support sound forest practices.



Diagram 1: Sustainable Forest Management



The Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international association of environmental and social groups, the timber trade, workers, indigenous peoples' organizations, responsible businesses, and community forestry groups from around the world. It is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization formed to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management around the world through the certification of forest management practices.

FSC's international certification system is guided by 10 principles which can be adapted into local FSC standards for tropical, temperate, and boreal forests around the world. Throughout the principles and related criteria there is a focus on community forest management, on local benefits from the forest (both intrinsic and monetary), and on operating within local objectives while considering landscape level effects. From a planning perspective, the concentration is on adaptive management and using the precautionary approach.

There are two types of FSC certification which are interdependent in producing certified forest products:

- forest certification and,
- product certification.

Forest Certification is directed towards on-the-ground forest management practices and related procedures. Those obtaining forest management certification are responsible for ensuring compliance with the FSC’s principles and criteria and they are termed “Resource Managers”. Resource Managers are certified and audited to the FSC’s principles of forest stewardship on an annual basis by independent third party auditors accredited by FSC.

Product Certification is directed at those producing wood products (e.g. sawmills, pulpmills, and printers) and it is referred to as “Chain of Custody”. The FSC has introduced an international labeling scheme for forest products which provides a credible guarantee that a given product comes from a well-managed forest by ensuring full Chain of Custody for the materials used in producing a given product. For a wood product to be labeled and sold as “certified” it must originate from a certified forest management operation and be produced in a facility that holds Chain of Custody certification.

A Framework for Good Management

Certification works to ensure that management practices are consistently applied across the forest landscape assuring everyone, from community members to forest managers to wood product consumers, that the forest and all its values have been considered. Forest certification provides:

- A framework to implement sustainable forest management
- Assurance of a forest well-managed for all values
- Credibility and accountability for forest management practices
- Access to unique markets and potential for increased revenues from the sale of wood products.

Chain of Custody Certification

Chain of Custody is the path taken by raw materials, processed materials and products, from a certified forest to the consumer, including all stages of processing, transformation, manufacturing and distribution. It provides an opportunity for forest product producers to become certified to the internationally recognized standards for responsible forest management developed by the FSC, and is required by companies or individuals that process, transform or trade FSC-certified forest products that wish to market and sell these products as FSC-certified (Table 1).

“Forest product certification may provide access to a market that may otherwise not be available – the ability to sell products from ‘well-managed’ forests seems to be a growing trend.”

~ Scott Davis,
FOREST CERTIFICATION COORDINATOR
EASTERN ONTARIO MODEL FOREST



Companies or Individuals	Certification Required
Sawmills, Lumber Yards	Yes
Manufacturers of Forest Products	Yes
Building Contractors	No
Artisans	Yes
Timber Brokers, Wholesalers	Yes
Retailers	No
Pulp & Paper Producers	Yes
Paper Merchant	Yes
Publisher	No
Printers	Yes

Table 1: Companies or individuals that need certification.





There are 4 Basic Types of Chain of Custody Certification:

1. Chain of Custody certification for Manufacturers and Processors – sawn wood, assembled and chip products
2. Chain of Custody certification for Distributors, Wholesalers, Brokers, Printers and Paper Merchants
3. Group Chain of Custody certification – smaller value added companies meeting requirements
4. Multi-Site Chain of Custody certification – one company with multiple locations

Benefits of Chain of Custody Certification

The FSC system is voluntary, market-based, and growing. Seventy countries worldwide have certified forests; more than 10 percent of all managed forests in Canada are FSC-certified. The FSC market is valued at \$5 billion US worldwide, with thousands of FSC-labelled products available.

Being an FSC-certified forest product producer gives you access to new and expanding markets, improves your corporate image and your social and environmental credibility. For employees and customers, it's a measure of your commitment to real value – all the way back to the forest.

FSC Chain of Custody certification can also be used to demonstrate compliance with many mandatory government and voluntary private procurement policies/specifications such as the Green Building Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. LEED, which is at the forefront of a rapidly growing green building market, rates building designs based on the materials employed and performance expected. Choosing FSC helps you achieve LEED certification and projects using FSC-certified wood gain a full LEED credit (depending on quantity).

Why Would My Business Need Chain of Custody Certification?

The FSC Chain of Custody system connects responsible forest management practices and products with consumers. That means the products come from well-managed forest operations, where the needs of local communities (including First Nations) have been considered, where high-value conservation areas are protected, and where logging is done in a sustainable way.

Through FSC Chain of Custody, companies can demonstrate their commitment to environmentally and socially responsible forest management and label their products with the FSC trademark. Selling products that carry the FSC-label is a guarantee that they come from a forest evaluated against rigorous environmental and social standards. Because of this rigour,

the system holds real value. When you sell forest products with the FSC logo, it's the real thing. Not only does it help to balance economic, environmental, social and community values today, it also means these same values will be maintained tomorrow and beyond.

FSC Chain of Custody certification is for companies that process, transform or trade FSC-certified forest products. It enables companies to:

- Identify and control their sources of FSC-certified and reclaimed/recycled material;
- Show their customers that they meet FSC requirements for the control of non FSC-certified wood and fibre;
- Use the FSC trademarks and labels to promote their products in the marketplace.

Steps to Becoming a FSC Chain of Custody Certified Forest Product Producer

Forest product producers interested in pursuing FSC Chain of Custody certification will need to meet requirements in five areas:

1. Quality system requirements
2. Wood sourcing requirements
3. Production controls and record keeping requirements
4. FSC product and label requirements
5. Documentation requirements

For producers interested in pursuing FSC Chain of Custody certification there are two options. If you are a smaller forest product producer, you can either pursue certification independently, or you can pursue certification under a Group Chain of Custody Certificate. Medium and large sized forest product producers must pursue certification independently.

In either case, because the Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF) aims to become a leader in assisting forest product producers obtain Chain of Custody certification in Canada, it has developed a suite of publications and tools to aid all forest product producers in doing so.



“For years, we’d been told that procuring environmentally sound commercial printing papers meant sacrificing quality and incurring higher costs. With the Domtar EarthChoice line, that is simply no longer the case. Indeed, being green no longer requires painful compromises. There are no more excuses for not doing the right thing.”

~ Peter ter Weeme,
VICE PRESIDENT, MOUNTAIN
EQUIPMENT CO-OP





1. Pursuing FSC Chain of Custody Certification on Your Own

With the help of the EOMF Tool Kit, there are 5 basic steps to becoming FSC Chain of Custody certified:

1. Contact an FSC accredited certifier:
Scientific Certification Systems: www.scscertified.com
SmartWood Program: www.smartwood.org
Soil Association/Woodmark: www.soilassociation.org
KPMG: www.kpmg.ca
SGS International: www.sgs.com
2. Submit an application to the individual certifier
3. Complete the on-site audit of your facility
4. Receive the certification approval
5. Maintain the requirements of the certificate and have annual audits

Please visit www.eomf.on.ca/publications or contact the EOMF if you are interested in obtaining any of these documents.

2. Pursuing FSC Certification Under a Group Chain of Custody Certificate

e.g. Eastern Ontario Model Forest Group Chain of Custody Program

The EOMF has achieved Group Chain of Custody certification and will act as the **Group Manager** on behalf of smaller value added wood product manufacturers as well as smaller printers and will become the primary contact for the certifier. There are requirements to become a member of the group as well as responsibilities to maintain membership. The Eastern Ontario Model Forest hopes to take the technical challenges out of becoming FSC Chain of Custody certified and provide an affordable option to certify small businesses, so they can in turn sell their wood and paper products as FSC-certified.

Group Chain of Custody Membership and Manager Requirements*

1. Memorandum of Understanding with the EOMF outlining roles and responsibilities
2. Group Manager will prepare written procedures for a multi-site certificate for all Members
3. Members will follow established policies for material procurement, record keeping and tracking
4. Group Manager and Members will coordinate control systems to deal with handling and tracking certified material
5. The Group Manager and Members will undergo annual audits to ensure compliance of procedures
6. The Group Manager and Members will adhere to FSC-label usage

* This is not an exhaustive list, it is a list of key items; all items required for certification are listed within the *EOMF Forest Certification Program Policies & Procedures Manual*.



Checklist for Chain of Custody Certification

- Request an EOMF Certification Tool Kit
- Contact an FSC-accredited certifier
- Determine potential FSC product groups using the EOMF Tool Kit template
- Submit an application to the certifier
- Compile a complete supplier list
- Complete a risk assessment for your wood suppliers using the EOMF Tool Kit template
- Complete a documented control system using the EOMF Tool Kit template
- Complete controlled wood policies and procedures using the EOMF Tool Kit template
- Determine staff training requirements for new policies and procedures
- Develop a credit tracking system using the EOMF Tool Kit template

Forest Chain of Custody Certification Tools Developed by the EOMF

- *EOMF Chain of Custody for Forest Product Producers Information Brochure*
- *A Guide to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Chain of Custody Certification for Forest Product Producers*
- *A Certification Tool Kit for Forest Product Producers which includes:*
 - *A Documented Control System Template*
 - *A Controlled Wood Policies and Procedures Template*
 - *A Risk Assessment Template*



“The Eastern Ontario Model Forest was invaluable in helping us develop and document the policies and procedures necessary to obtain our FSC Chain of Custody certification. The tools they have developed will be a huge asset for any company considering doing so.”

~ Sandy Grella,
LANARK CEDAR



The Eastern Ontario Model Forest

As part of a network of some 40 model forests that span the globe, the Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF) works with government, NGOs, landowners, industry, First Nations, and other stakeholders in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest region to develop new ways to sustain and manage our forest resources.

The EOMF champions the belief that we all have a stake in ensuring that the environmental, economic, cultural and social values of eastern Ontario's forests are maintained for the benefit of all, now and in the future. The model forest provides a unique forum where forest users, many of whom may never have met before, can forge partnerships and gain a greater understanding of conflicting views, share their knowledge, and combine their expertise and resources.

The principle behind the model forest program is simple: demonstrate how partners, representing a diversity of forest values, can work together to achieve sustainable forest management using innovative, region-specific approaches.

The Forest Certification Program is just one of many EOMF projects. The EOMF currently has over 30 projects and initiatives underway, ranging from courses for landowners on timely topics and educational programming for children, to monitoring and reporting on the state of the forests in eastern Ontario. For more information on EOMF projects and initiatives, please visit www.eomf.on.ca.

Useful Forest Certification Links:

www.eomf.on.ca
www.certification.eomf.on.ca
www.ecfo.eomf.on.ca
www.fsc.canada.org
www.smartwood.org
www.certifiedwood.org

EOMF Forest Certification Program Contact Information:



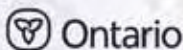
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of Akwesasne



"Market demand for FSC-certified forest products is growing. Forest operations and producers that supply FSC certified products and promote this service have successfully gained access to these growing markets"

- Antony Marcil,
PRESIDENT AND C.E.O.
FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC) CANADA



Mixed Sources

Product group from well-managed
forests and other controlled sources
www.fsc.org Cert no. SW-FM/COC-232
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