

Wildlife/Dangerous Tree Assessor Course Administrative Standards

Contents

1. Candidate Pre-qualifications	2
2. Qualification Procedures	2
3. Restriction or Denial of Qualifications	2
4. Terms and Conditions of Qualification	3
5. Time Period for Certification	3
6. Appeal Procedure of Failure of the WDTAC Exam	3
7. Renewal of Qualification.....	4
8. Wildland Fire Safety Module Upgrade Course.....	5
9. Code of Conduct.....	5
10. Participant Safety	6
11. Qualified Persons.....	7

1. Candidate Pre-qualifications

The following pre-qualification standards are required by candidates who wish to take a Wildlife/Dangerous Tree Assessor's Course (WDTAC) for the first time:

Candidates must have the following minimum course pre-requisites (at the time of registration):

- Three or more years of practical field experience in the area of forestry, resource management, parks management, wildland fire protection, arboriculture, or a related field; and
- Grade 10 equivalency in reading, writing and arithmetic skills (including the ability to calculate percentages); and
- Ability to identify tree species native to BC; and
- Proven forestry measurement skills (including ability to determine tree diameter, height, lean, stem cross-section, and skill in distance measuring).

Additionally, candidates taking the Wildland Fire Safety module must also have the following course pre-requisites (at the time of registration):

- Persons must demonstrate that they have recent fire-line experience (at least 10 days over the previous 2 years); OR
- Persons have a minimum of 5 days of documented dangerous tree assessment experience (forest activity, parks, wildfire operations) in the previous calendar year.

2. Qualification Procedures

A candidate will receive qualification as a Wildlife/Dangerous Tree Assessor for a 4.0 year period beginning from the date of successful completion of the WDTAC. Successful completion of this course requires that the following three conditions be met:

- Candidate had the mandatory pre-requisites at the time of registration, AND
- Achieve a minimum score on the oral field exam of 85%; AND
- Achieve a combined minimum average score on the written exam and oral field exam of 75%.

3. Restriction or Denial of Qualifications

The Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel (comprised of at least two members from the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Committee¹) has the right to restrict or deny qualification where the candidate is lacking the pre-requisites OR would be unable to perform the duties of a qualified assessor because of a physical impairment. Physical impairments of this nature would be those that would impair the candidate's ability to physically bend and manually probe or excavate tree roots or be able to look upward and see into the upper crown of trees for aerial hazards.

¹ The Wildlife Dangerous Tree Committee (WDTC) is the advisory body that represents all wildlife dangerous tree matters in British Columbia. It is a multi-agency committee composed of representatives from the provincial government and WorkSafeBC, as well as a committee coordinator.

4. Terms and Conditions of Qualification

The qualified assessor must follow the safe work practices and procedures of Wildlife/Dangerous Tree assessment as outlined in the WDTAC. The qualified assessor must only conduct Wildlife/Dangerous Tree assessments in those areas in which they were trained (i.e., applicable to the WDTAC module(s) which they have successfully completed) AND have suitable qualifications and experience. The qualified assessor must not engage in inappropriate conduct, not restricted to but including falsely rating a tree for hazards (as either safe or dangerous) in order to achieve other objectives.

4.1 Suspension or Cancellation of Certificates

The Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel has the right to suspend or cancel qualification where the candidate has knowingly breached a term or condition of the certificate OR has otherwise contravened a provision or intent of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation, or Ministry of Forests or Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy regulations (including the Forests Act, the Forest and Range Practices Act, Park Act, Ecological Reserve Act and the Wildlife Act). Contravention of these regulations or contravention of the terms and conditions listed in section 4.0, may lead to the suspension or cancellation of qualification.

4.2 Re-instatement of suspended certificates

A person with a suspended certificate can be re-instated by the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel by retaking the WDTAC. The length of suspension will be determined by the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel and is linked to the severity of the infraction or contravention, and whether this was committed as an act of ignorance versus an act of recklessness. Suspension of qualification can be appealed to the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Committee of British Columbia. See section 6.2 for a description of appeal procedures.

5. Time Period for Certification

Wildlife/Dangerous (Hazard) Tree assessor certificates are valid for a 4-year time period. To continue working as an assessor the certificate must be renewed no later than the expiry date printed on them at the time of issuance. This 4-year time period applies to any certificates of any of the modules. Renewal of qualification is the sole responsibility of the certificate holder. For certificate renewal requirements, see section 7.0.

6. Appeal Procedure of Failure of the WDTAC Exam

A) A candidate's initial request for a review of failure of the WDTAC exam(s) should first be directed to the course examiner. The examiner will immediately review the exam results with the candidate to provide rationale and an explanation for the decision rendered, and to provide the candidate with an opportunity to ask questions. Upon request, the candidate will be given a written clarification of the exam results from the course examiner, addressing any contentious issues. The request for written clarification must be submitted to the examiner within 30 days of the examination date.

B) An appeal of the course examiner's decision may be made by the candidate to the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel within 30 days of the date from which the examiner forwarded the written clarification to the appellant. The appeal is commenced by a letter, which states:

- the matter that is being appealed; AND
- the reason(s) why the candidate objects to the examiner's decision; AND
- what decision the candidate thinks should be substituted.

C) The Wildlife Dangerous Tree Assessor Panel will provide the candidate with a full written explanation of the appeal decision within 30 days of receipt of the candidate's written appeal submission.

6.1 Re-Examination Procedure

If a candidate fails a course and subsequently goes through the appeal process and is unsuccessful in the appeal ruling, then the individual seeking qualification must attend and retake the entire WDTAC.

6.2 Appeal Procedure for Suspended Certificates

Appeal of suspension of qualification must be directed in writing to the Wildlife Dangerous Tree Committee of British Columbia (WDTAC) and will be based solely on written evidence and submissions. The appeal submission must:

- State the reason(s) why the suspended person objects to the suspension decision; and
- Describe any relevant information which the suspended person believes is pertinent to a reversal of the suspension decision.

The WDTAC will provide the appellant with a full written explanation of the appeal decision within 30 days of receipt of the written appeal submission. If the appeal decision is granted in favour of the appellant, then suspension of qualification will be lifted. In this circumstance, the original date of expiry of qualification will apply. Refer to section 5.1 for certificate extension procedures.

7. Renewal of Qualification

For persons who wish to renew their WDTAC qualification for an additional 4-year period following the expiry date of the original qualification, the following options exist:

1. For persons who have held certification a minimum of two 4-year periods (eight years) and who can demonstrate active ongoing work experience in the field of Wildlife/Dangerous Tree assessment (a minimum of 5 days active wildlife/Dangerous Tree assessment experience in the preceding year), a challenge exam can be taken. This will entail successful completion of both a written examination and demonstration of field competency as set by the WDTAC
2. For persons who DO NOT meet the requirements outlined in section 7(1), then the entire WDTAC must be retaken and successfully completed (see section 2.0)
3. Qualification renewal for a 4-year period will be dated from the time of successful completion of the procedures described in clauses 7(1) or 7(2).

8. Wildland Fire Safety Module Upgrade Course

The WDTAC requires that the following criteria be met by persons who register for a 1-day Wildland Fire Safety module upgrade course, typically held in succession with one of the other course modules:

- Persons must hold a valid certificate for the WDTAC Forest Activity or Parks module; AND
- Persons must demonstrate that they have recent fire-line experience (at least 10 days over the previous 2 years); OR
- Persons have a minimum of 5 days of documented dangerous tree assessment experience (forest activity, parks, wildfire operations) in the previous calendar year.

If persons cannot meet the requirements described above, then they must take the full 2-day WDTAC Wildland Fire Safety module if they wish to gain this certification.

9. Code of Conduct

9.1 Overview

The WDTAC is committed to providing a working and learning environment in which all students, support staff and instructors are treated with respect and dignity. Course participants and instructors have a responsibility to respect the rights of others and to cooperate in creating and maintaining an environment that is free of harassment and discrimination.

9.2 Grounds for Expulsion from a Course

Prohibited conduct that is subject to expulsion from a course, without reimbursement, includes any of the actions of misconduct described below:

- (a) physically aggressive behaviour, assault, harassment, intimidation, threats or coercion;
- (b) conduct that threatens or endangers the health, safety or property of any person;
- (c) conduct that creates conditions that endanger the health, safety, property or well-being of any person;
- (d) engaging in a course of vexatious conduct, harassment or discrimination that is directed at one or more specific persons and that is based on any of the protected grounds under the *BC Human Rights Code*; and
- (e) engaging in unwelcome or persistent conduct that the student knows, or ought to reasonably know, would cause another person to feel demeaned, intimidated or harassed.

In addition, any conduct on the part of a course participant that might reasonably be judged to have an adverse affect on the integrity or the proper functioning of the course, or the health, safety or rights of the course participants and instructor(s), is subject to expulsion from the course without reimbursement.

9.3 Responsibilities of Students

Full attendance and participation is expected of participants (i.e., in-class and field training, homework completion). Students who do not attend all aspects of training and/or do not attempt to complete homework assignment(s) may be excluded from taking the course examinations without reimbursement. Students are expected to provide accurate information, to the best of their knowledge, via the registration process, for the purpose of:

- (a) recording and retaining a record of their standing with the program; and
- (b) establishing they have the necessary prerequisites for a course.

9.4 Grounds for Withholding Results

Students may be denied their proof of completion of courses in the event of non-payment of any portion of the course fees.

9.5 Complaint Procedure

Participants may raise concerns about conduct as follows:

- (a) During the delivery of a course, a student should report concerns to the instructor.
- (b) Concerns involving an instructor, or other personnel employed for the delivery of courses, should be reported to the WDTAC via the WDTAC coordinator or to the course delivery agent (e.g., UNBC Continuing Studies).

10. Participant Safety

To promote the health, safety and rights of the course participants and instructor(s), students registering for a WDTAC will be expected to abide by the safety procedures outlined in the Communicable Disease Safety Plan established by the delivery agent for the WDTAC. Persons prohibited from participating in a WDTAC delivery will include:

- Any person who is sick or begins to display symptoms of sickness (e.g., the symptoms include: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and painful swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue and loss of appetite), whether or not the illness has been confirmed as Covid-19.

Students should note that safety procedures and public safety directives for COVID-19 and any other communicable diseases are subject to change.

Workers and employers with questions or concerns about workplace exposure to communicable diseases can call WorkSafeBC's Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland (toll-free within B.C. at 1.888.621.SAFE). You will be able to speak to a prevention officer to get answers to your questions, and if required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.

For other questions about COVID-19 or other communicable diseases, contact:

- 1.888.COVID-19 (1.888.268.4319) for non-medical information about COVID-19
- 8-1-1 (HealthLink BC) to talk to a nurse if you need advice about how you are feeling and what to do next, or to obtain the latest updates on best practices to address COVID-19 or other communicable diseases.

11. Qualified Persons

To promote safety of worksites, persons who have the knowledge, skills and abilities to recognize potential tree hazards in Forestry Activities or in Parks, Recreations Sites and Trails can be trained to assess worksites for the presence of dangerous trees. If the worksite has level 1 disturbance activities, then a qualified person (QP) could perform the mandatory dangerous tree assessment and make recommendations for worker safety prior to the start of work activities. However, the QP must be trained how to perform the full tree assessment process and must be supervised and mentored by a certified Wildlife/Dangerous Tree (WDT) Assessor.

Note that QP are not sufficiently experienced or qualified to perform independent tree assessments for sites having high stem densities (>500 stems/hectare) of potentially dangerous trees, or complex sites which have been structurally damaged (e.g., widespread windthrow events, stand decadence). In these complex stand types, tree assessment must be performed by a certified WDT Assessor.

11.1 Qualified Person Training

The Wildlife Tree Committee website provides a QP training module for use and guidance in training QP assessors. The instructor guide and student manual provide the foundation for effective QP training, including a competency component. The training session should be a minimum of 4 hours of training and must include a field competency component to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities to identifying, assessing and managing suspect trees for level 1 disturbance activities. Training records must be kept by the employer.

11.2 Qualified Person Instructor

To deliver the QP training, an experienced WDT Assessor who has successfully completed the WDT Assessor Course at least twice for the area of practice (e.g., Forest Activities module certified for a QP session in forest activities) could deliver the QP training using the materials provided by the Wildlife Tree Committee. Companies who select a QP instructor need to ensure this person is current in their WDT Assessing certification, is competent and active in performing WDT Assessments (a minimum of 5 days of assessing in the previous year) and ideally has experience and aptitude for delivering adult learner training.

11.3 Qualified Person Mentoring

Enlisting the support of a trained QP to assess worksites for dangerous trees requires regular supervision by a certified and experienced WDT Assessor. This supervision will include competency field checks and corrective mentoring to ensure the QP is supported and capable of assessing worksites.