

Timber Marking and Branding

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Tenure is the mechanism by which the government transfers specific rights to use Crown or public forest and range land and resources. Timber tenure agreements prescribe how and to whom rights to timber on Crown land will be awarded. Under the *Forest Act*, no timber may be removed from either Crown or private land unless the timber is marked with a Timber Mark. Timber marks are used to identify the specific cutting authority or geographic location where the timber was harvested as well as other specific information. They are issued by the Ministry and consist of unique sets of letters, numbers and sometimes other characters which are stamped or written on the ends of logs.

Timber Brands are also issued by the Ministry and identify timber which has already been scaled and where it was scaled.

Each year the provincial timber harvest comes from harvesting conducted on some 40 000 active timber marks. Transport of this harvest to the place of scaling or a transport point for forwarding, sees the movement of almost two million truckloads of logs annually.

Timber marks and brands play an important role in ensuring timber is transported and scaled in a controlled manner. It ensures that harvested timber is correctly accounted for.

This chapter discusses:

- requirements which must be met before timber can be transported off the area of harvesting,
- the different types and categories of timber marks and brands as well as their purpose,
- requirements for applying timber marks and brands,
- log salvage identification marks and their use,
- the scaler's responsibilities, and
- the availability of websites for applications and information about timber marks/brands and related information.

2.1 Registered Timber Marks

To harvest and transport timber off either private or Crown land, you must:

1.
 - a. For private timber, obtain a timber marked certificate,
 - b. for Crown timber, hold an agreement under the *Forest Act* as well as a cutting authority or other authorizations as required under the agreement.
2. Complete an application or a Mark/Site Designation. *
3. Mark the timber in accordance with the requirements set by the ministry and with the timber mark described in the timber mark certificate or cutting authority.

All timber marks issued by the ministry are entered on the Timber Mark Registry. Details on the registry include:

- the timber mark,
- the registered owner(s) of the mark,
- the land parcel(s) cover which the mark is valid,
- the issue date and expiry date of mark certificates (maximum five years), and
- the harvesting licence type (for Crown land), issue date and expiry date.

* Scale site designations or Mark Site Designations (MSD) are agreements between the owner of the timber and the Ministry to transport harvested timber to a specific site for scaling. Application for an MSD is available on the [Public Forms Index](#). An application form, letter, email or other must be completed and delivered to scaling staff in the district of the timber's origin. See the *Scaling Administration* chapter for more information.

2.1.1 Purpose of Timber Marks

Timber marks identify the authority under which timber is harvested and are used to identify other information about the timber after it has been removed from the harvesting site. This information includes:

- the stumpage rate, or that the timber is without fee,
- whether or not the timber may be exported from the province without first being manufactured,
- the identity of the mark holder, and
- area of origin.

Timber marks are issued to the owner of the timber (or a person with Power of Attorney) or the holder of the harvesting licence. This identity is essential for assigning financial and other obligations. It is an offence for any person to use a timber mark without express consent of the mark holder.

Timber marks are also viewed as evidence of ownership just like brands on cattle. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, timber marked with a registered timber mark is the property of the mark holder, unless there is evidence to the contrary. The same is true of marine log brands discussed in Section 2.3 of this chapter.

Under the Ministry policy, only one registered mark may be issued for a given land area. Log ends may carry other information as long as the registered timber mark is not obscured.

Terms for timber marks are set as follows:

1. For Crown Timber - the timber mark expires upon the expiry of the agreement. If the agreement is suspended or cancelled, the timber mark is also suspended or cancelled at the same time.
2. For Private Timber - timber marks held under a timber mark certificate, in most cases, have a maximum duration of five years. The certificate may be renewed upon expiry or with the consent of the applicant, may set a duration of less than five years.

2.1.2 Timber Marking Requirements

Under the *Forest Act* and ministry policy, all timber must be conspicuously marked on the area of harvest as soon as possible after it is cut and prior to any transportation off the area or any manufacture. Unless exempted, timber must be marked in the prescribed manner.

The prescribed manner is set by regulation and is described in the *Forest Act – [Timber Marking and Transport Regulation](#)*.

Talk to District Scaling Staff about exemptions to Timber Marking standards.

Under the *Forest Act*, it is an offence to remove, obliterate or alter a mark that has been applied to timber before the timber has been used in manufacturing.

2.1.3 Requirements of the Scaler

The scaler's principle responsibility is to ensure the timber marks found on the timber are accurately recorded. Where a scaler believes that timber has been incorrectly marked, they should contact the local Ministry District Office as soon as possible.

The scaler must:

- legibly record the mark appearing on the timber according to the documentation requirements set out in the *Documenting and Reporting* chapter of the *Scaling Manual*,
- know what marks are approved for scaling at that scale site through a scale site designation letter or web site access to: [Mark Site Designation Site](#), and
- know what to do if timber arrives at the scale site bearing marks which are illegible, inadequate, invalid or not approved for scaling at that site. Procedures are usually specified in the scale site authorization. If not, the scaler should contact the local Ministry District Office as soon as possible.

The scaler must be familiar with the scale site authorization as well as their authorization to scale.

2.1.4 Timber Mark Formats






Over the history of registering timber marks the format of the marks has been used to serve many needs. Until recently, timber mark certificates over private land had no expiry. Because of this, many historical mark formats are still in place.

Timber marks are generally comprised of numbers and letters, and may include other distinguishing features, such as crescents and bars. There are some twenty-two classes of timber marks in use and within these classes there are numerous mark styles.

Many different timber mark configurations may be encountered. Contact the local Ministry office if there is any confusion concerning the validity of a mark or to receive instructions on how to record it.

2.1.4.1 Recording Characters

Record the following special symbols, which may form part of a timber mark, as follows:

Mark Symbol		Data Entry Key
 () (a crescent)	=	' (apostrophe)
 (a wavy line)	=	: (colon)
 < (a delta)	=	< (less than symbol)
/ (a slash within mark)	=	/ (slash)
 (a bar)	=	- (hyphen or dash)

Record the number zero, as 0, with no line through it.


Record the alpha character, \emptyset , with a stroke through it.

Record the number seven without any line through the centre, 7.

Record the letter, I, and ensure it is crossed at the top and bottom, to differentiate it from a one (1) or a lower case L.

Record the letter J, with the top crossed to distinguish it from a U.

Record the letter S with an underscore to distinguish it from a 5.

Record the letter Y, not , to distinguish it from a 4 and a U.

Record the letter Z with a line through it to distinguish the letter from a number 2.

Record the number 4, not 4, to distinguish it from a 9.

2.1.5 Types of Marks

There are two major types of marks:

- those from Provincial Crown tenures and Federal Crown reserves, and
- those from private and federal lands.

For more information on timber tenures and private marks please go to the Tenures website at:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/index.htm>

For a comprehensive list of timber mark types please go to the link below:

[Timber Mark File Types](#)

2.1.5.1 Major Types of Timber Marks

2.1.5.1.1 Forest Licences and Timber Sale Harvesting Licences

Where more than twenty-six (26) cutting permits will be issued, a “mark designate” is assigned; otherwise the mark follows the format of timber sale licences. These designates consist of two letters and a number followed by 3 alpha/numeric characters. An example of this is Forest Licence A55477. The mark designate is FR8 followed by three characters denoting the applicable cutting permit 63U,

- recorded as FR863U.

2.1.5.1.2 Tree Farm Licence

Tree Farm licence marks will appear as two separate alpha/numeric characters underneath. The top numeric designates the licence number and the bottom number designates the cutting permit. These marks are recorded with a slash (/) after the two numbers on top,

- recorded as 23/229.

2.1.5.1.3 Timber Sale Licences

Timber sale licences are all issued in the “A” series, which is the letter A followed by five numbers, often with a letter following denoting the cutting permit. If no cutting permit is required, the mark for licence A12345 would be recorded as: 12345 and the mark for licence X 12345 would be recorded as: <12345. Where cutting permits are required, the designate is attached to the end of the mark,

- recorded as 12345B.

Other types of timber sale licences can be encountered, but in general they all follow the above format for recording on the tally sheet.

2.1.5.1.4 Timber Licences

Timber licences most often appear as a T and four numbers, for example, T1234. If a timber licence agreement includes a cutting permit, it will have the cutting permit in the form of a letter (the designate). The designate is the last alpha/numeric character, so in this context it would be T1234, then followed by the cutting permit identifier, which could be a single letter that is to be recorded at the end,

- Recorded as T1234A.

Since June 2007, a change has occurred in how new timber marks are created for Timber Licences and Woodlot Licences. The new format is TNNNAK where:

- T - represents the file type Timber Licence.
- NNN - 3 alpha/numeric mark designate. This is system generated.
- AK - CP identifier supplied by the client. Sometimes this is a single character (the letters I or O cannot be used) and if this is a single character the system will 'pad' it with a zero in front of the cutting permit letter designate.

These new marks can be all alpha characters which is similar to private marks so care must be taken to identify the type of mark that is being recorded.

2.1.5.1.5 Woodlot Licence

Farm Woodlot licences issued under the old *Forest Act* use "FW" on the mark with the number of the woodlot appearing below. Woodlot licences under the present *Forest Act* use a licence number in the "W" series. Generally, marks relating to woodlots are recorded as they appear on the log. However, because several changes have been made over the past few years, the mark may appear with the cut permit indicator in the middle. The marks for Woodlot licences are also systems generated and behave the same way as for a timber licence. There are four alpha characters for the designate, always starting with 'W' and the client supplies the cutting permit identifier which can be a letter or number, but most often a letter. If a single letter is provided by the client the system will 'pad' the identifier with a zero in front of the letter.

2.1.5.1.6 Occupant Licence to Cut

Licences to cut begin with an "L" followed by five numbers as in L12345. Older licences have two letters followed by three numbers. The first letter is always "Y" and

the next letter indicates the region of origin as follows: YC & YW are Williams Lake, YV is Vancouver, YK is Kamloops, YR is Prince Rupert, YN is Nelson, and YG, YH, YE, YD, and YF are all Prince George Forest Region. Some of these historical marks are still in use and so, use historical region codes. This series appears on a hammer mark with the two letters over top of the numbers,

- recorded as YC12345.

2.1.5.1.7 Cash Sale Licences

Cash sale licences are always a “D” or an “A” followed by five numbers. Cash sale timber is “prepaid” and further scaling is not required. Cash sale timber can be scaled for operational needs but returns are not usually required to be submitted. The scaler should confirm the local requirement with the forest district,

- recorded as D12345.

2.1.5.1.8 First Nations Reserves

Timber from First Nations Reserves carries a mark with ID, IN, or IR followed by one, two or three numbers. Z has also been used historically,

- recorded as IR123.

2.1.5.1.9 Road Permits and Rights-of-Way

Old style road permits are assigned with an R, followed by five numbers, the first is commonly zero. This zero must not be recorded as the letter O [Ø],

New style road permit marks are associated to all over arching licences. That would be any licence that allows for cutting permits and has a mark designate. The configuration of the road permit mark is the same as for a cutting permit, it is the **licence designate** followed by three alpha/numeric fields (OR1 – zero, the letter R and a number) depending on how many road marks are required for that licence. One road permit can have many marks. In most instances that will only be one permit of a licence. However, since rates vary between districts, if a licence crosses district boundaries there will be more than one road permit,

- old style recorded as R01234,
- new style recorded as BC50R1.

2.1.5.1.10 Christmas Tree Permit

Christmas trees are not normally marked individually with a registered mark because of their small size; rather those in possession of Christmas trees will always carry a copy of their permit, and prominently display the permit number on bundles of trees in transport. The Christmas tree permit begins with the letter C followed by five numbers,

- recorded as C12345.

2.1.5.1.11 Watershed Agreements

Watershed agreement marks all begin with WS and a number, followed by the number of the cutting permit attached to the agreement. For example, the agreement number “1” with a cutting permit number 6,

- recorded as WS1006.

2.1.5.1.12 Free Use Permit

Free use permits, though uncommon, are issued for a number of purposes. Administratively, they are like a cash sale, where the Ministry determines the volume of timber to be harvested prior to the harvest taking place, and the applicant pays for it at the time of making the application. As with Cash Sales, the scaler should check with the local district staff to determine the scale submission requirements,

- recorded as FUP1234.

2.1.5.1.13 Master Licence to Cut

Master Licences to Cut are administered by the Oil and Gas Commission. These are issued when there is a legal right to occupy Crown land but not to harvest the timber. Some of these circumstances are roads for geophysical exploration, development of well sites or pipelines, mines or oil pits. They are consecutively numbered and consist of three letters and three numbers below the letters,

- recorded as ABC123.

Designates are the Cutting Permit that is attached to a timber mark, usually as the last character of the mark. It is used when the area of the Timber Mark is such that Cutting Permits are needed to designate the area that particular timber is cut from.

2.1.5.1.14 Community Forest Licence

Community Forest Licences all begin with a K, followed by a number, followed by a letter, followed by the 3 alpha/numeric characters of the cutting permit,

- recorded as K2P100.

2.1.5.2 Marks for Privately Owned Land

2.1.5.2.1 Crown Grant – Exportable and Non-Exportable

Some older exportable marks incorporating combinations of number, letters and special characters are still in use. The most common is two letters followed by three numbers. Recently issued exportable marks issued begin with an E followed by four letters. For older marks, the scaler would expect to see such combinations as AA123, A12 (with crescent or bar) and 1A1 (with crescent) and for newer marks, EABCD. Recently issued non-exportable marks begin with an N followed by four letters and appear as NABCD. Older marks would appear with number and letter combinations such as AZ009, A1, A99, 99A (with crescent beneath) and 99AA. An “H”, followed with the letter H, M, N, P, Q, S, T or Z and three numbers,

- recorded as HS123 or 99A’.

2.1.5.2.2 Letter of Marking Authority – Exportable and Non-Exportable

This is an historic timber mark and has not been issued since 1996. Letters of marking authority are issued to identify minor quantities of logs removed from private lands alienated prior to March 12, 1906. This mark is a series of six letters; the first letter is “L”, indicating that it is a letter of marking authority, and the second letter is “E”, indicating that it is exportable. The following four letters refer to a specific authority. Non-exportable letters of marking authority are the same as the exportable marks except the second letter is an [N], indicating that it is non-exportable. The marks would appear on logs as LNA over BCD,

- recorded as LNABCD or LEABCD.

Exportable timber marks are subject to Federal controls, while non-exportable timber marks are subject to provincial controls. Information on the exportability of timber is available at:

[Log Export](#)

2.2 Log Brands

2.2.1 Scaled Timber Brands

2.2.1.1 Authority

Part 5 of the *Forest Act* provides that:

- timber that has been scaled and will be transported from its place of scaling must first be conspicuously marked with the scaled timber brand which pertains to that scale site,
- the ministry may exempt scaled timber from this requirement where warranted,
- no person shall remove, obliterate, or alter a brand that has been applied to timber,
- the ministry upon application may issue a certificate describing a scaled timber brand upon application of the scale site operator, and may attach conditions concerning use of the brand, and
- the ministry may cancel a scaled timber brand.

It is an offence under the *Forest Act* to fail to apply a scaled timber brand as required or to remove, alter or obliterate a brand that has been applied to timber.

2.2.1.2 Purpose

Scaled timber brands are used to indicate:

- that timber has been scaled,
- where the timber was scaled, and
- the forest district where it was scaled.

Timber consumption patterns see thousands of truckloads of timber being transported around the province each year in both scaled and unscaled forms. The scaled timber brand and load documentation as required by the Ministry helps ensure all timber is scaled and that scaled timber is not scaled twice.

2.2.1.3 Marking Requirements

Unless exempted by the Ministry, scale sites may not ship scaled timber from a scale site unless they have been issued a scaled timber brand and that brand is applied to the outgoing timber.

Brands are non-transferable and may not be used except with the written consent of the certificate holder.

The responsibility for physical application of the brand falls jointly upon the holder of the certificate and any person using the brand with the consent of the holder (employees, log truck drivers, etc.). The brand *cannot* be applied to any timber that has not been scaled. Application of a brand to unscaled timber may result in charges under the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Timber branding information is contained in the [Timber Marking and Transportation Regulation](#).

2.2.2 Requirements of Scalers and Timber Weighers

Scaler's may not assume that timber delivered to a scale site has been previously scaled unless it meets the branding requirements and is accompanied with other supporting documentation as may be required such as the Load Description Slip. Where doubt exists as to the scaled status of delivered timber, the scaler or weigh person should place the timber in a secure storage area and contact the local Ministry office as soon as possible.

2.2.2.1 Format of Scaled Timber Brands

A separate scaled timber brand certificate may be issued for each authorized scale site. The format of the brand is a three character alpha code representing the forest district in which the timber is scaled, and a three or four character alpha-numeric code identifying the scale site where the timber was scaled. Please refer to the map which details Forest Regions and Districts at the website:

[Region and District Map](#)

2.2.2.2 Applying for a Scaled Timber Brand (FS 1308)

Applications for Scale Sites and Scaled Timber Brands and Timber Brand Certificates are available on the [Public Forms Index](#).

2.3 Marine Log Brands

2.3.1 Authority

The *Forest Act* provides for issuing marine log brands on receipt of an application. The Ministry issues a certificate which describes the marine log brand. Marine log brands are registered by the Registrar of Timber Marks and any given marine log brand will not resemble any other registered log brand.

Marine log brands differ from scaled timber brands in several ways:

- they are meant for timber which will be transported in the ocean,
- their use is optional (unless their use is conditional upon an exemption to using a scaled timber brand),
- they do not indicate where they were scaled,
- there are relatively few marine log brands (less than 50 and generally only one per licensee), and
- marine log brands denote ownership.

2.3.2 Purpose

Like scaled timber brands, marine log brands are taken as proof that timber has been scaled.

The main purpose of a brand is to allow the owner to identify and recover timber lost and subsequently salvaged in the coastal waters.

2.3.3 Marking Requirements

Marine log brands may be applied to timber only after it has been marked with a registered timber mark and scaled. Refer to the [Timber Marking and Transportation Regulation](#) for more information.

2.3.4 Requirements of Scalers

Where beachcombed logs are scaled, a marine log brand takes precedence over any other marks or brands on a log. The scaler must record the marine log brand as the timber mark.

2.3.5 Format of Marine Log Brands

Marine log brands are from one to four letters, often stylized as shown, such as A, AB, ABC, or RC:



2.3.6 Applying for a Marine Log Brand

Persons applying for a marine log brand must complete an application in the form required by the Minister. The application must include a prescribed fee as well as a facsimile of the marine log brand applied for.

Upon confirming the proposed marine log brand does not resemble any other registered log brands, the Registrar of Timber Marks may issue a certificate which describes the marine log brand.

2.4 Log Salvage Identification Marks

2.4.1 Authority

The *Forest Act* also provides for establishing log salvage districts. Within the log salvage district a licence may be granted to operate a receiving station. Permits may also be granted to persons wishing to salvage logs.

In a log salvage district, all logs recovered by log salvors (permit holders) must be returned to the log salvage receiving station.

2.4.2 Purpose

Log salvage identification marks are issued to log salvage permit holders. This mark denotes that the log on which it appears was, at one time, in the possession of the permittee (log salvor).

2.4.3 Marking Requirements

Salvors must hammer indent the mark on the ends of logs as soon as they take possession of the log.

2.4.4 Format of Log Salvage Identification Marks

Log salvage marks are always one to four numbers enclosed in a diamond and are read starting from the top going counter clockwise.

