



Prime Contractor

Everyone in the forest industry needs to be **qualified** to do their work safely. This includes anyone doing the work of being a prime contractor, here's the definition of **qualified**:

"**qualified**" means being knowledgeable of the work, the hazards involved and the means to control the hazards, by reason of education, training, experience or a combination thereof.

Prime contractors are responsible for coordinating the safety activities of all companies on a worksite. The definition of prime contractor is:

"**prime contractor**" means, in relation to a multiple-employer workplace,

(a) the directing contractor, employer or other person who enters into a written agreement with the owner of that workplace to be the prime contractor, or

(b) if there is no agreement referred to in paragraph (a), the owner of the workplace.

Prime contractor requirements are only in place when there is a **multi-employer workplace**, which is a workplace where workers of 2 or more employers are working at the same time;

This is an often misunderstood part of the process, if you are the only contractor or company on site then the prime contractor requirements do not apply. The **owner** of a workplace is an important part of the prime contractor process. It is the owner that assigns prime contractor status through a written agreement and if that agreement isn't in place, the owner is the prime contractor. For most forestry operations, the owner is a licensee that hires contractors to complete projects. Licensees can range from large forest companies to smaller companies that have successfully bid on Timber Sale Licences or individual Woodlot Licence holders.



Key Questions and Actions:

As an owner have you **assigned** prime contractor status?

If **no**, then **you** are the Prime Contractor.

A Prime Contractor must:

- 1) **Compile** all the safety information and share this information with designated supervisors.
eg: onsite hazards and the ways to control those hazards, work plans, safe work practices, etc.
- 2) **Communicate** any changes in the worksite and any necessary action(s) to the designated supervisors.
eg: changes to plans, established safe work practices, access, etc.
- 3) **Coordinate** the activities on site to ensure a safe operation.

As an owner, if you have assigned Prime Contractor status, you must:

- 1) **Assess** if the contractor has the knowledge, capacity and control to successfully coordinate the safety activities at the worksite.
- 2) **Establish** a signed agreement that outlines what is required of the prime contractor.
- 3) **Conduct** a pre-work meeting with the prime contractor where all safety information is shared and a site visit is conducted.
- 4) **Inform** the prime contractor of all changes to the worksite that might affect their coordination of the safety activities.
- 5) **Release** the prime contractor of their obligations in writing once work is finished.

Note: Item # 5 is not regulation but a best practice.

Resources:

BCFSC Prime Contractor Guide: http://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/tr_pdfs/rpkg_prm_cnt.pdf

(Note: linked document above includes Prime Contractor Agreement template.

BCFSC Prime Contractor Poster: http://www.bcforestsafe.org/files/ps_PrimeTimePoster.pdf

BCFSC Woodlot Safety Program: http://www.bcforestsafe.org/woodlot_safety.html

Workers Compensation Act, see section 118:

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96492_00