

# FORESTRY FACTS



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## **The Managed Forest Law: What Constitutes a Mandatory Practice?**

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Approved Managed Forest Law (MFL) management plans will or may contain mandatory practices. As a participant in the MFL program, you will be required to implement these mandatory management prescriptions in order to fulfill your part of the agreement.

Mandatory practices include:

1. Harvesting mature timber according to sound forestry: Timber harvests can range from the removal of selected trees within a forest or the removal of all of the trees within a given area. The type of harvest that takes place depends on the objectives of the landowner and the type and quality of forest present or the potential stand conditions based on the growing conditions.

2. Thinning plantations and natural stands for merchantable products: Thinning is a forest practice to create more growing space for some of the better quality trees by removing competitors. This will provide more growing space and improve the health and vigor of the better quality trees that remain. The trees that are harvested have value for a number of forest products industries and are therefore called “merchantable.”

3. Release of conifers and hardwoods from competing vegetation: The term “release” means to give the desirable tree species for the forested area room to grow. The term is applied to situations where the desired composition is younger trees and there exists a high percentage of competing poor quality or undesirable trees or grasses that need to be removed. As the trees or grasses are removed to ensure the success of the younger trees, the remaining trees are said to be “released” or have more room to grow free from competitors. The desirable tree species is usually determined in the forest stand objective or within the forest stand goals or in the mandatory practice describing the release of desirable tree species from competing vegetation. The desirable tree species could be conifers, hardwoods, or a combination of the two. Coniferous trees are trees with cones and needles such as pine, spruce, fir, and cedar. Hardwood trees are deciduous trees with leaves.

4. Reforestation of land: Properties to be entered into the MFL program must meet a minimum level of trees per acre. A minimum of 200 trees per acre is needed for a property to be considered productive and qualify for entry into the program. That number must be improved to a minimum of 400 seedlings per acre for planted

seedlings or 800 naturally established seedlings per acre within three years of being enrolled or being deforested. Additionally, in some cases additional tree seedlings must be planted to supplement areas where the natural seedling growth or the planted trees are inadequate to fully stock the future forest.

5. Pre- and post-harvest treatments to insure adequate regeneration: There are a number of different things that can be done to ensure that forests regenerate adequately. Some forest types require a seed bed of bare soil for seeds to germinate and survive. Exposing the soil immediately before a harvest or just after the harvest will create the proper conditions to establish seedlings and regenerate these forest types (this practice is called site preparation for natural regeneration). Post-harvest treatments are implemented to control excessive residual, low value trees or other vegetation such as shrubs,

ferns, sedge, grasses, weeds, etc that can inhibit the growth of tree seedlings of desirable species. Treatment of the undesirable vegetation can include mechanical such as felling or girdling undesirable tree species or chemical treatment of undesirable vegetation.

6. Soil conservation practices to control erosion from forestry practices: Forest management activities can cause excessive erosion if care is not taken in the implementation of the management plan. Best Management Practices were developed to guide foresters in the design and timing of activities to minimize soil loss due to erosion. Conservation practices might include reduced activities near bodies of water, seeding and installing water bars and diversions on logging roads, and locating logging roads and stream crossings where they will have the least impact on sensitive areas.