

**Directive No.** 97-11                      **Date** September 23, 1997

**Subject**                      **Checking Weigh Scale Operations**

**Purpose**                      To identify and correct improper weighing, poor scaling, or record keeping by the timber operator at the time of data collection.

To ensure timber production is maintained within sustainable levels.

**Policy**                      The Timber Management Regulation and the Forests Act both require all timber operators to provide information to the government regarding timber harvest and wood product manufacture. It is imperative that this information be accurate and complete. To ensure this, the attached procedures should be followed when checking weigh scale operations.

**Procedure**                      **Checking the Weigh Scale**  
In order to account for timber volumes, a weigh scale must be approved by the Department. The weigh scale must conform to the specifications outlined in Sections 4.2 & 4.3 of the Alberta Scaling Manual.

All weigh scales are governed by the Federal Weights and Measures Act and its Regulations. Manipulation or tampering with a weigh scale's operation is a criminal offence. A periodic review of load records for unreasonable weights or weights consistently close to the maximum allowable may give an indication of unacceptable weighing practices.

**Checking Sample Log Scaling**  
Check scaling will be completed on an operator's 'sample loads', and completed as described in the Scaling Manual.

**Scaling Accuracy**  
A +/- 3% tolerance has been established to allow for variation between the weigh scale and check scale for each load of timber. When loads fall outside this tolerance, the following steps should be taken.

1. The check scaler reviews his/her own work to ensure its accuracy.
2. The check scaler and the company scaler review the data and sample load to resolve the difference.
3. If the load has been removed or the difference cannot be resolved, the check scaler will use the check scale data, or consider the sample load cancelled and subject to replacement, by the check scaler, at random.

Scaler's accuracy should be verified by re-scaling at regular intervals throughout the timber year. If the scaler's accuracy is consistently poor and does not improve, a re-examination or suspension of the scaler may be in order.

### **Check Scale Intensity**

In an effort to ensure the sustainability of Alberta's forest resource, Land and Forest Division (LFD) will aim to check scale an overall provincial average of 10% of all operator sample loads. Those operators with an annual allowable cut (AAC) of less than 100 000m<sup>3</sup> ('small' operators) will have a minimum of 3 loads check scaled during their operating year. Those operators with an AAC greater than 100 000m<sup>3</sup> ('large' operators) must have a minimum of 8 loads check scaled during their operating year. Check scales must not be completed at intervals less than once every three weeks for 'small' operators and not less than once every two weeks for 'large' operators. This will help to ensure representative check scale samples are taken. Ideally, check scaling should be evenly distributed throughout the operating year.

Check scaling intensity should be increased, at the discretion of the Forest Area Manager, when:

- problems or discrepancies exist in sample scaling data;
- inexperienced scalers are being used for operator scaling; or
- operators are handling volumes significantly greater than their AAC (i.e. purchased or private volumes).

Forest Area staff, along with the Provincial Scaling Co-ordinator, will determine if additional checking is required to meet the provincial target of 10%.

### **Fixed Ratio Check Scaling**

Where an operator uses fixed ratios to convert load weight to timber volume and check scale samples are being used to recalculate this ratio, a minimum of 3 check scaled loads per operating year will be required, regardless of the operator's AAC.

### **Sample Selection**

Regular checks are to be made by Forest Area staff to see that TM 86 Sample Cards are being properly used and the correct samples are being selected. If a sample load is missed, a replacement may only be made under the approval of the check scaler. Any load substitutions should be noted under the comments section of the Weight Scale Compilation Sheet (Form TM 44).

When random number generators are being used, Forest Area staff should verify that sufficient samples are being chosen randomly by the system.

### **Checking Records**

Emphasis should be placed on obtaining clear and complete sets of scale data. The inspector will date and initial only those forms that are checked. Any corrections required are to be made neatly without obscuring the original entry. In some cases, forest companies have approval to use other forms in place of those listed below. If an operator would like to use a substitute version of a TM form, Forest Business Branch (FBB) should be contacted for review and approved. Consideration for checking the various scale forms are as follows:

### 1. TM32 Cube Scale Tally and Microscale Data

The **Microscale** header (or load record information) must be checked to ensure the TM9 number, source and load numbers, net weights and number of trees match the TM 9 Form. All Microscale data used for file naming must be entered, including the mill code, scaling population and load numbers. Species and product groupings on the log scale tally must match those on the TM 44 and TM 262.

### 2. Recording of Weights (TM 35)

These calculations should be checked randomly to ensure accuracy. Particular attention must be given to unauthorized use of a constant tare weight, improper conversions to metric, or improper designation of source.

### 3. TM 44 Form or Accepted Substitutes

It is important that each TM 44 follows the scaling population structure (TM 262) established for the timber year. If this involves the creation of new scaling populations, FMD approval is required. Key items to check are:

1. The transfer of weight and sample data information must be correct;
2. The form must be fully completed;
3. Prior month totals must be carried forward correctly;
4. Population numbers are to be correct for the timber source and species as denoted on the TM 262.

### 4. Check Scale Report (TM 119)

Only approximate costs are required. Final calculations can be made to the nearest 0.25 day and nearest whole dollar. Reports are to be submitted monthly.

---

## Authorities

**Alberta Scaling Manual** - outlines procedures in determining timber volumes.

**Section 99 of the Timber Management Regulation** - requires all timber producers to measure and scale timber volumes under the procedures established by the Minister under the Scaling Regulation. Establishes the procedures of the Alberta Scaling Manual as the acceptable standard for scaling.

**Section 112(2) of the Timber Management Regulation** - requires the use of specified forms and allows for substituted forms to be accepted.

**Section 12 of the Scaling Regulation** - allows the Minister to rescind a scaler's certificate.

---

## Cross- Reference

- Alberta Scaling Manual

## Contacts

Dan Wilkinson - 427-6372

Doug Schultz - 422-4865

---