

# Northeast Master Logger Certification



## Field Verification Guide

## Company Data to Collect

\*Company Name            \*Company Type (Contractor, Sole Proprietor or Single Component Operator) \*Owner  
\*Company Contact        \*Mailing Address            \*Phone (office/home, cell)        \*Fax  
\*Email address

## Issues to Discuss

(same document for Interview/Verification – used to reconfirm)

Referring to their Readiness Packets:

- \*Stress the importance of Management and/or Harvest Plans and signed contracts. These are the documents that should clearly describe and define the harvest outcomes and who is responsible to assure the outcomes are being met.
- \*History of NEMLC and types of recognitions
- \*Certification and Third Party vs. First and Second Party Certification (NPH-ML is third-party certified)
- \*NPH-ML is a certification signifying that a company operating a single component of a harvesting operation meets ML goals and harvest responsibilities as they pertain to the harvest. Therefore, the wood being harvested does not meet the certified wood requirements and the company is not eligible for exemption from the Maine Liquidation Harvesting Law.
- \*When assessing NPH-ML be alert to the interface and differences between the single component operations, such as between the harvester and the forwarder.
- \*The NPH-ML will be assessed against the Goals and Harvest Responsibilities of the NEMLC Program. The difference will be that the assessment will focus on the harvest responsibilities of the single component operator.
- \*Additional Trust Certificates that apply to harvesting companies – NEMLC, SmartLogging, FM, CoC
- \*Let them know that they are committing to submitting a short annual survey about amount and location of harvests in order to stay under a Trust certificate (required for our annual audits by an FSC accredited certifying body)
- \*Go through steps of NEMLC application process, recertification, and continuous improvement tracking + 800#, random audits, and how the Certification Board works
- \*Talk about the Code of Ethics, how NEMLC raises the money to keep the costs of certification affordable, and our request that candidates uphold the program by referring criticism and comments to staff for constructive re-evaluation. In other words, don't spread negativity about the program if you want to be a part of making it better!
- \*Discuss difference between training and recognition. NEMLC is a recognition program – no promised benefits, but many have evolved. Goal is to keep the logger in the recognition chain within a certified product market that previously left them out.
- \*NEMLC certifies the company, not the individual. A continuous improvement expectation is that company leaders will take the opportunity to build teamwork and communication by educating crew members about their NEMLC recognition. By the time of recertification (about 2 years after initial certification) crew members should understand their NEMLC recognition adequately to discuss it with verifiers.

## Guiding Questions for Company Profile

**A Company Profile has already been completed as part of the Readiness Folder. If you do not have a copy, call the TCNEF office. Use the sheet and reconfirm the components.**

\*Ask candidate to tell you about their harvesting background and the story of their company and career.

\* # of employees

\*equipment used (be specific especially for the NPH-ML)

\*types of work done and for whom (be specific especially for the NPH-ML)

\*primary markets

\*employee supervision

\*who's in charge of the prescription?

\*employee training

\*professional affiliations

\*employee turnover/retention

\*workshops or training attended in the past 2-3 years

\*safety training/workshops attended in the past 2 years

\*employee programs/benefits

\*professional partnerships (i.e. foresters, ecologists, engineers, etc.)

**Ask: Why do you want to become a Master Logger Company?**

**Has your company been involved in any disputes over the past 5 years? Please explain.**



**GOAL 2: PROTECT WATER QUALITY** (Note applicability and responsibility of the Harvest Responsibility as the contract clearly indicates.)

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Organize and plan road construction and access to harvest location in a manner that prevents soil erosion and does not impede water flow**

Performance Standards

- 2.1b. Truck road construction is minimized
- 2.1c. New roads are kept from streams and from lakes
- 2.1d. Cut/fill banks are stabilized outside road bed near water
- 2.1e. Drainage ditches are adequate to divert water out from road
- 2.1f. Road grades are broken prior to stream crossings to manage water flow into filter strips
- 2.1g. Road surfaces are outsloped, insloped, or crowned as appropriate to the situation
- 2.1h. Culverts are setback from junction and placed to sufficiently manage water flow
- 2.1i. Culverts are installed so that subsequent road maintenance does not result in damage to culverts
- 2.1j. Culverts are installed in a manner not to impede fish passage
- 2.1k. Culverts are sized for periods of high volume water flow

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Prepare skid trails in a manner that does not reduce soil absorbency**

Performance Standards

- 2.2b. Steep trails are stabilized with vegetation or brush
- 2.2c. Sensitive areas are harvested when the ground is frozen or dry
- 2.2d. Water turnouts/bars are used to divert surface runoff
- 2.2e. Topography is considered in the skid trail layout to avoid wet areas
- 2.2f. Layout of skid trails considers predominant lean of the stand where chainsaw felling is used

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Attend to stream management zones in a manner that does not divert or concentrate water flows**

Performance Standards

- 2.3b. Stream channel integrity is maintained
- 2.3c. Harvest operations are timed for appropriate conditions
- 2.3d. Adequate shade is retained over perennial, intermittent, and first order streams
- 2.3e. Extra caution is used in filter strips to protect banks, edges, and water quality of streams, ponds, and lakes
- 2.3f. Streamside vegetation is protected/maintained and not diminished

**Harvest Responsibility #4: Manage stream crossings during harvest and road building**

Performance Standards

- 2.4a. Stream and stream approach characteristics are considered when locating stream crossings
- 2.4b. Number of stream crossings is minimized through the pre-planning harvest process
- 2.4c. Permanent and portable bridges are used to cross streams when necessary
- 2.4d. Stream crossings are placed at right angles to the stream
- 2.4e. Stream crossing devices are installed in a manner not to inhibit fish passage
- 2.4f. Fill is compacted as appropriate during culvert installation
- 2.4g. Integrity of stream channel is maintained during installation and removal of stream crossing devices
- 2.4h. Stream banks are left intact after removal of temporary stream crossing devices
- 2.4i. Soils of stream banks and skid trail/truck road approaches are stabilized during the harvest and following close-out

- 2.4j Exposed soil areas are stabilized to reduce erosion and prevent introducing sediment into streams and water bodies
- 2.4k Woody material is not added to streams, and existing material is not disturbed

**Harvest Responsibility #5: Establish logging yards at the proper distance from streams, ponds, lakes, marshes, steep slopes, and wetlands so as to maintain the benefits of vegetation next to water bodies**

Performance Standards

- 2.5b Water draining in and out of landings is managed in relation to nearby water bodies
- 2.5c Disturbance to the forest floor is minimized by using controlled yarding
- 2.5d Logging yards are established at the proper distance from streams, ponds, lakes, marshes, vernal pools, and wetlands
- 2.5e Exposed soil areas are seeded post harvest

**Harvest Responsibility #6: Monitor all regulations and obtain necessary permits in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.**

Performance Standards:

- 2.6a:** National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act standards are met
- 2.6b:** State Water Quality standards are met
- 2.6c:** Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it relates to waterways is met
- 2.6d:** Land Use Regulatory Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, as they are titled by state, and any municipal permits are obtained
- 2.6e:** Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as titled by state, and other state specific departments, significant and essential habitat is noted on the harvest plan
- 2.6f:** Harvest site is reviewed after the first winter to determine the effectiveness of erosion control, stream protection, etc., and corrective action is taken as necessary
- 2.6g:** Rare, threatened, and endangered plants and/or unusual or exemplary natural communities are noted by state specific Natural Areas Programs

**GOAL 3: MAINTAIN SOIL PRODUCTIVITY** (Note applicability and responsibility of the Harvest Responsibility as the contract clearly indicates.)

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Assure future forest soil productivity by harvest planning and on-the-ground layout**

Performance Standards

- 3.1a Disruption of soil organic layers is limited during all harvest operations
- 3.1b Soil condition is considered when matching equipment to the harvest
- 3.1c Sensitive sites are harvested when dry or frozen
- 3.1d Slash is placed in skid trails to reduce compaction and mixing of soils
- 3.1e Number of skid trails/truck roads/landings is minimized through field reconnaissance and pre-harvest planning
- 3.1f Best management practices are applied and documented to minimize erosion and soil loss

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Minimize and stabilize exposed soil**

Performance Standards

- 3.2a Filter areas (forest areas bordering water bodies) are identified on the harvest plan
- 3.2b The capacity of filter areas to absorb and filter runoff from roads, landings, and skid trails is maintained
- 3.2c Materials are available to implement multiple strategies for addressing exposed soil

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Close out harvest site, complete the post-harvest check sheet, and follow-up as necessary**

Performance Standards

- 3.3a All roads, trails, and landings are stabilized through the use of appropriate best management practices, applied to minimize erosion and soil loss
- 3.3b Sites without forester involvement are checked by the harvesting company one year later (post mud season) for erosion, sedimentation, or other issues unless other arrangements have been made with the landowner

**GOAL 4: SUSTAIN FOREST ECOSYSTEMS** (Note operator awareness of any pertinent ecosystem delineation considerations.)

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Determine if the forest management plan has delineated current wildlife habitat to remain undisturbed. If no management plan exists, wildlife habitat should be delineated in the harvest plan**

Performance Standards

- 4.1a Trees with cavities, standing dead trees, downed logs, large super canopy trees, and longer-lived tree species are favored and retained in a creative and safe manner in compliance with OSHA hazard tree regulations.
- 4.1b Width and development of riparian zones are documented
- 4.1c Vernal pools are marked and left undisturbed year round, and disturbance to soils surrounding pools is minimized
- 4.1d Plan documents any significant and essential wildlife habitats identified by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as titled by state, and specifies how they will be treated
- 4.1e Harvest supports overall biodiversity
- 4.1f Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it related to terrestrial habitats is met.
- 4.1g Harvesting is consistent with recommended practices for biodiversity conservation

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Check all special or unique sites and clearly mark boundaries per harvest plan**

Performance Standards

- 4.2a Species-specific habitat is protected as marked (based upon Maine Natural Areas Program)
- 4.2b Areas being managed for biodiversity are marked
- 4.2c Harvest plan is consistent with MLC standards for Goal Two (Protect Water Quality), Goal Three (Maintain Soil Productivity), Goal Four (Sustain Forest Ecosystems), and Goal Five (Forest Aesthetics)
- 4.2d State Natural Heritage or Natural Areas Programs, biodiversity assessments in unorganized territories, and Habitat Maps of organized towns are consulted for the presence of unique or critical habitat when creating the harvest plan. Significant and essential rare, threatened and endangered species habitat is identified and noted on the harvest plan
- 4.2e Important natural communities and wildlife habitats are supported by the harvest planning process

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Discuss with the landowner/forester the need for attention to preserving native biological diversity**

Performance Standards

- 4.3a Harvests maintain natural species diversity and regeneration appropriate to the site
- 4.3b Harvests leave downed woody material in the forest and redistribute when appropriate
- 4.3c Wildlife and plant diversity is noted on the harvest plan (see Natural Areas Program designations – further instructions by state in NEMLC Standards Guidance document)

**Harvest Responsibility #4: Delineate any understory/overstory areas landowner/forester wants preserved due to unique flora/fauna**

Performance Standards

- 4.4a Areas to be avoided are clearly marked on the harvest or management plan and in the field
- 4.4b Deer wintering areas are harvested during late winter months to provide tops for feed and skid trails for deer travel
- 4.4c Special treatment areas such as legacy areas, forest openings, and wildlife trees are clearly marked on the harvest or management plan.

**Harvest Responsibility #5: Ensure that post-harvest stands are left in good condition for future forest growth and regeneration (special attention should be focused on the job responsibility of the NPH-ML; discussions may want to include the company forester)**

Performance Standards

- 4.5a Except for super canopy trees, wildlife snags, legacy patches, and other special situations outlined in the harvest plan, all trees in clearcuts are felled and removed, and the site is ready for regeneration or planting
- 4.5b Harvests avoid water yet leave adequate amounts of coarse woody debris for nutrient capital and habitat
- 4.5c Adequate, good quality regeneration of the desired species is left undamaged, especially if advanced regeneration is relied upon for the next generation of trees
- 4.5d Adequate numbers of good quality crop trees are left for future growth
- 4.5e Damage to roots, boles, and crowns of trees in the residual stand is minimized during the harvest and extraction process

**GOAL 5: MANAGE FOREST AESTHETICS (Note operator awareness of aesthetic considerations. Job close-out requirements should be specified in contract.)**

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Discuss the aesthetic considerations of the harvest with the landowner/forester**

Performance Standards

- 5.1b Landowner/forester understands the harvest plan and resulting post-harvest aesthetic, and harvest area boundaries are marked on the plan
- 5.1c Landowner/forester informs abutting landowners of changing forest aesthetic due to harvest and negotiates any suggestions/conflicts

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Exhibit an aesthetic sensitivity in areas that adjoin roads and highways, known recreation trails, landing areas, vistas, and other areas of local community value**

Performance Standards

- 5.2a Harvest plan documents any geologic, archeological, historical, cultural, ecological, or aesthetic special areas to be preserved
- 5.2b Guidelines for protecting local community value areas are made clear to all employees of the harvesting company
- 5.2c Land boundary markers are not damaged during operations
- 5.2d Rock and geologic structures are avoided during the harvest
- 5.2e Harvest and trail access is situated around natural boundaries whenever possible
- 5.2f Buffer zone around areas to be preserved by the landowner/agent/forester is clearly marked and understood



**Harvest Responsibility #3: Communicate with employees to ensure the removal of unnecessary debris from the harvest site and seed landing areas when prescribed**

Performance Standards

- 5.3a Post-harvest supervision includes inspection of all key areas for debris removal and the quality of seeding in disturbed areas
- 5.3b When markets do not exist, excess woody debris is removed from the landing and distributed throughout the site
- 5.3c Edges are feathered adjacent to clearcuts in a riparian zone

**Harvest Responsibility #4: Cultural features of historic value (e.g. stone walls, wells, cemeteries, cellar holes, etc.) are protected during logging operations**

Performance Standards

- 5.4a The landowner is consulted about location of historic or cultural resources
- 5.4b Significant sites are identified on the harvest plan and marked on the ground
- 5.4c Employees are directed to avoid or protect areas of significant or historical value
- 5.4d Damage to stone walls is minimized by utilizing bridges or bar ways, where possible. Damaged walls are repaired following harvest

**Harvest responsibility #5: Property boundaries are respected**

Performance Standards

- 5.5a Property boundaries in the vicinity of the harvest area are known to the operator and clearly marked
- 5.5b Limits of the harvest area are known and can be clearly identified by the operator are clearly marked
- 5.5c Operator checks with landowner to ensure that there are no conservation easements on the property that will affect the harvest operation
- 5.5d Operator minimizes disruption to abutting landowners' access to their property

**GOAL 6: ENSURE WORKPLACE SAFETY (Be specific as to what equipment is being operated when discussing this goal.)**

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Initiate Superior Management Practices (SMPs) that exceed minimum expectations of federal and state safety laws**

Performance Standards

- 6.3c Management provides for employee supervision at each landing
- 6.3d Company has a policy outlining the storage of hazardous materials. Chemicals and containers of liquid or solid non-organic wastes are disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.
- 6.3e Employees are prepared for all emergencies, and emergency phone numbers are posted in each piece of equipment

*Note: OSHA standards are Master Logger standards for all MLC companies including sole proprietors. Expectations are: (1) separation of operations, (2) managing danger trees, (3) communication system between workers, and (4) equipment mandates*

**GOAL 7: DEMONSTRATE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Develop and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)**

Performance Standards

- 7.1a Employees are trained to use NEMLC Vision and Principles as definitive guidelines when faced with non-regulated scenarios
- 7.1b A continuous improvement approach is utilized to solve problems and correct mistakes
- 7.1c Promising research is translated and utilized in the field

- 7.1d Harvest company monitors forest inventory data provided by the state or federal government to stay abreast of forest conditions and trends.
- 7.1e Harvest company develops a documentation process with landowners or uses the Harvest Integrity System (see NEMLC Standards Guidance document)

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Incorporate advanced and emerging harvest technologies**

Performance Standards:

- 7.2a Internet resources are utilized to monitor emerging harvest technologies
- 7.2b Communication systems are continually upgraded with the goal of linking loggers in the woods

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Maintain accurate production data (be specific as to the equipment and the job responsibilities)**

Performance Standards

- 7.3a Source origination of the forest product is tracked within each company through the Harvest Integrity System (HIS)
- 7.3b Harvest planning and implementation costs are tracked, with consideration given to variables such as weather, equipment breakdown, subcontractor delays, etc.
- 7.3c Company keeps harvest records including owner, location, acreage, and volume by species/product through the Harvest Integrity System (HIS)
- 7.3d Any remediations to the harvest plan are documented

**GOAL 8: ENSURE BUSINESS VIABILITY**

**Harvest Responsibility #1: Provide technical and training support to company employees and abide by all federal and state labor laws**

Performance Standards

- 8.1a Livable wages and adequate benefits are provided to all employees and sole proprietors
- 8.1b Training programs on safety, harvesting practices, and labor laws are available to employees
- 8.1c Professional attitude of management, employees, and subcontractors is consistently evident in interactions with other wood harvesters and the public
- 8.1d The company has a clear, written dispute resolution process in place

**Harvest Responsibility #2: Utilize technology to improve planning and decision making**

Performance Standards

- 8.2a Company business plan is updated
- 8.2b Company institutes computerized cost tracking, inventory, and accounting systems
- 8.2c Company uses internet resources for planning and decision making

**Harvest Responsibility #3: Actively participate in the logging industry on local, state, regional, and national levels.**

Performance Standards:

- 8.3a Access to diverse markets is established through professional contacts
- 8.3b Master Logger Certification designation is marketed and promoted to end users and consumers in local and state markets
- 8.3c Membership in professional and trade associations is maintained
- 8.3d Mentoring opportunities are developed for young men and women interested in the wood harvesting industry

## **GOAL 9: UPHOLD CERTIFICATE INTEGRITY**

### **Harvest Responsibility #1: Protect NEMLC Codes**

#### Performance Standards

- 9.1a: Earned NEMLC certificate numbers are not shared with non-NEMLC companies for use in the sale or transport of non-MLC harvested wood.
- 9.1b: NEMLC companies will not buy wood harvested by a non-NEMLC certified harvester and sell, or otherwise represent it, as Master Logger wood using their certification code. (Check for proper use of trip tickets related to ML.)

### **Harvest Responsibility #3: Maintaining CoC Certification Files (For Chain of Custody Group Members)**

#### Performance Standards

- 9.3b: The site manager maintains an up-to-date file of required certification information, including the Rainforest Alliance CoC guidelines and standards, training/orientation materials, the certification number, and annual auditing procedures. (Check for proper use of trip tickets related to CoC.)