

Frequently Asked Questions

Pest Management Plan

Rights-of-Way



Background

FortisBC is seeking public, stakeholder and First Nations input as we update integrated pest management plans (PMPs) for facilities, wood poles, and rights-of-way. All three of these plans are for a five year period from 2010—2015.

Appropriate pest management initiatives improve the safety and reliability of FortisBC's electrical system while helping to reduce the spread of noxious weeds, invasive plant species and other pests. Pest management plans are required by legislation.

FortisBC is committed to open dialogue with customers, stakeholders and First Nations. We believe your feedback is an important part of the process as FortisBC develops these pest management plans.

The facilities and wood poles pest management plans are available for review and comment until **November, 30, 2009**.

The rights-of-way pest management plan is available for review and comment until **December 21, 2009**.

FortisBC is renewing three Pest Management Plans:

Wood poles PMP

To ensure public safety and electrical system reliability, FortisBC inspects wood power poles along distribution lines and carries out treatment if required. Poles are inspected, tested for strength, and treated as required with wood preservatives to prevent and/or stop decay. Typically, treated poles have a longer service life than untreated poles.

The wood preservatives are approved and registered for utility wood poles by Health Canada. Preservative applicators are certified and licensed by the BC Ministry of Environment and work is completed under the direction of FortisBC.

Facilities PMP

Weeds and other vegetation in and around FortisBC facilities including office buildings, substations and generation plants can cause hazards to workers and the general public. To effectively control weeds and other vegetation, FortisBC uses integrated vegetation management techniques. These techniques are described in the facilities PMP.

Continued on next page



Rights-of-way PMP

FortisBC undertakes vegetation management on transmission and distribution line corridors because:

- Trees growing into transmission lines conduct electricity, posing a serious safety hazard. They can also start fires
- Trees and branches can blow or fall over and knock transmission lines down
- Thick vegetation can prevent line workers from getting to a downed line in an emergency or during routine maintenance

FortisBC uses many methods to manage vegetation on line corridors, including hand slashing, mowing and other mechanical methods. Selective use of herbicides is also used in areas where repeated sprouting of deciduous tree species occurs.

All of these methods have their own benefits and limitations. FortisBC chooses the best management method for each situation based on the principles of integrated pest management, considering how effective and practical the alternatives are, and the possible impacts on the environment.

Why are they called “Pest Management Plans” when they mostly address vegetation? Wouldn’t it be more accurate to call them “Vegetation Management Plans”?

FortisBC has three pest management plans as required under the Integrated Pest Management Act. Under the Integrated Pest Management Act, a “pest” is defined as *an injurious, noxious or troublesome living organism, but does not include a virus, bacteria, fungus or internal parasite that exists on or in humans or animals* and a “pest management plan” means *a plan that describes (a) a program, for managing pest populations or reducing damage caused by pests, based on integrated pest management, and (b) the methods of handling, preparing, mixing, applying and otherwise using pesticides within the program.*

To be consistent with the Integrated Pest Management Act, all three plans are referred to as pest management plans, although the rights-of-ways PMP is focussed primarily on vegetation.

What is the public consultation for the PMPs?

The public consultation process and timeline are set out by provincial legislation. FortisBC has placed notification ads in newspapers throughout the service territory for the facilities, wood poles and rights-of-way plans. The draft plans are also posted on the FortisBC website.

Interested parties have the opportunity to provide feedback on facilities and wood poles drafts until **November 30, 2009**, and the rights-of-way plan until **December 21, 2009**.

Does FortisBC practice weed control under the PMPs?

FortisBC has standards in place to prevent the transfer and establishment of noxious weeds and invasive plants. FortisBC also works with regional weed committees to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Weeds are controlled when they have the potential to impact safety or system reliability, or to meet regulatory requirements such as the Weed Control Act and Invasive Plant Regulation.

Is it always FortisBC that completes the work?

No, work is often completed by contractors hired by FortisBC.



What is proposed for rights-of-way treatments?

The proposed duration of the PMP is from January 2, 2010 to January 1, 2015. The pest management methods proposed for use include physical (non-chemical) treatment methods (selective slashing, mowing, pruning and burning), a biological control agent (fungus), cultural control methods (planting low growing trees and shrubs and compatible tree species, encouraging agro-forestry, and tree growth regulators/inhibitors when and if registered), and the use of pesticides (herbicides).

The common name (and examples of trade names) of the pesticides proposed for use under this plan include: dicamba (Vanquish), glyphosate (Roundup, Roundup Weathermax, Glyphos, Vantage, Vantage Plus), and triclopyr (Garlon 4 or Garlon Ultra). Application methods include: foliar, soil, wick/wipe-on and cut surface, using backpack, wick/wipe-on applicator, squirt bottle, injection tools and handgun (power hose and nozzle). For further description of various chemical and non-chemical control methods, refer to section 2.6 of the draft rights-of-way pest management plan.

How does the public find out the exact details and dates of a pesticide / herbicide application?

Notification about the time, manner of notification and pest management treatment will be confirmed during the public consultation process. See section 5.0 of the draft PMP for proposed details.

What areas are you targeting?

FortisBC files an annual Intent to Treat with the Ministry of Environment, which includes maps showing the proposed treatment locations for the calendar year.

The proposed treatment areas are based on the results of monitoring inspections / patrols used to determine what action is required to minimize risks associated with the possibility of vegetation coming into contact with transmission or distribution lines.



What has FortisBC done in the past?

Since the late 1990s, the company has implemented a handful of isolated applications to less than 1% of its rights-of-way, targeting specific sites where the use of mechanical trimming was ineffective. These applications consisted primarily of targeted cut stump treatments and site-specific treatments of noxious weeds.

Is there monitoring of your PMPs?

Yes, accurate record keeping allows FortisBC and the Administrator, *Integrated Pest Management Act*, to ensure compliance with the *Integrated Pest Management Act and Regulation*.

FortisBC has also implemented contractor guidelines to ensure compliance with PMPs and will evaluate contractor's work through random inspections of sites treated with herbicides or pesticides.

Inspections will be undertaken on the ground, and will generally be based on visual evaluations. Evaluations may include both qualitative and quantitative determinations. Effectiveness of the treatments will be determined by comparing pre-treatment and post-treatment problem areas and vegetation levels.

Work will be inspected to determine:

- Compliance with the commitments made in this PMP
- Compliance with the *Integrated Pest Management Act and Regulations*
- That site objectives have been achieved
- The success of the treatment methods employed
- If pesticide free zones, no treatment zones and buffer zones were maintained
- If any negative environmental impacts have occurred
- If corrective action is required

How do I submit comments about the PMPs?

Feedback on the facilities, wood poles PMPs will be accepted until November 30, 2009 and rights-of-ways until December 21, 2009 by writing Brad Wright at Suite 100, 1975 Springfield Road, Kelowna, BC, V1Y 7V7, by emailing brad.wright@fortisbc.com, or by faxing 1-866-627-7038.

How do I get more information PMPs?

Visit the Environment section of the FortisBC website to view draft copies of the PMPs phone (250) 717-0804 or email brad.wright@fortisbc.com, or fax 1-866-627-7038.