

Frequently Asked Questions

Pest Management Plans

(Facilities and Wood Poles)



Background

FortisBC is seeking public, stakeholder and First Nations input as we update integrated pest management plans (PMPs) for facilities, wood poles, and later this year, right of ways. 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 plans are currently in draft form and available for review and comment. All feedback must be received by **November, 30, 2009**.

The right of ways pest management plan will be available for review toward the end of 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.

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Right of ways 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.



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 and wood poles plans. The draft plans are also posted on the FortisBC website. Interested parties have the opportunity to provide feedback until **November 30, 2009.**

The right of ways plan will be advertised and available for comment later this year.

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 right of ways PMP is focussed primarily on vegetation.

Is it always FortisBC that completes the work?

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

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 Act and Invasive Plant Regulation.

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 does the public find out the details of proposed wood pole or facilities treatments?

Proposed wood pole treatments

The pest management methods proposed for wood poles include stubbing (nonchemical), pole replacement (non-chemical) and wood preservative treatments (internal and external).

The common name (and examples of trade names) of the pesticides proposed for use under this plan include: copper naphthenate, sodium fluoride, borax (Cop-R-Plastic, CobraWrap, CuRap20), metam sodium (Woodfume, Guardsman Post and Pole Fumigant), disodium octaborate tetrahydrate (Tim-Bor Professional), boron, boric acid, copper (Impel Boron Rods II, CobraRod), and bendiocarb (Ficam D).

Application methods include: external bandages, internal liquid and solid treatments, and external insecticide treatments.

Proposed facilities treatments

The pest management methods proposed for use in and around facilities include physical (non-chemical) treatment methods (selective slashing, girdling, hand pulling, weed trimming, mowing, pruning, geotextiles and stump removal), the release of biological control agents (insects), cultural control methods (grass seeding), and the use of pesticides (herbicides).

The common name (and examples of trade names) of the pesticides proposed for use under this plan include: chlorsulfuron (Telar), clopyralid (Transline), dicamba (Vanquish), diuron (Karmex), glyphosate (Roundup, Roundup Weathermax, Glyphos, Vantage, Vantage Plus), hexazinone (Velpar), imazapyr (Arsenal), picloram (Tordon 22K), simazine (Simadex, Princep) 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).

How do I get more information PMPs?

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

How do I submit comments about the PMPs?

Feedback on the facilities and wood poles PMPs will be accepted until November 30, 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.

The right of ways PMP will be advertised and available for comment later this year.