



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Environment and Climate Change	Wildfire Safety Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
23-17463	Fort Smith	Forest Management Division

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Wildfire Safety Officer (Officer) provides leadership and direction for the effective development and delivery of safety management practices within the Forest Management Division (FMD). The Officer is an expert advisor on all aspects of occupational health and safety (OH&S), risk management, incident inspection, and oversees the implementation of the safety management system within the wildfire program of the Forest Management Division of the Department of Environment and Climate Change's (ECC). The Officer ensures that divisional staff understand the safety requirements related to wildfire operations and follow applicable legislation, policy and procedures. This focuses on creating and promoting a safety culture that demonstratively behaves in a safe manner.

## SCOPE

Located in Fort Smith and reporting to the Director, Forest Management (Director), the Wildfire Safety Officer is responsible for overseeing the planning, development, implementation, maintenance and evaluation of health and safety protocols of the Forest Management Division (FMD; Division). The Officer works to identify risks and mitigative actions, performs in-depth investigations into all safety incidents, critical incidents, and unusual occurrences where health and safety of people have been or could have been negatively impacted.

The Forest Management Division (FMD) provides the policy, planning and regulatory framework for the stewardship, protection, and sustainable management on 80 million hectares of forested land in the Northwest Territories (NWT). This role is pursued through interrelated programs, developed, and coordinated by FMD and implemented throughout five regions across NWT.



The Officer works collaboratively with stakeholders to proactively identify, analyze and mitigate occupational health and safety issues affecting staff and contract employees. The position also works within a team environment in accordance with the *Northwest Territories Safety Act*, Occupational Health and Safety regulations and applicable ECC related policy and safety guidelines.

The Officer works closely and in collaboration with 5 regional Managers of Forestry Operations, the Manager of Wildfire Operations, Manager of Prevention and Mitigation, Manager of Aviation Services, Manager of Logistics, Manager of Program Support, and Manager of Forest Resources. The position provides subject matter expertise to staff and contractors across all worksites, FMD and regional offices. Additionally, the Officer provides input into the development and implementation of OH&S communications and change management strategy to ensure clear and consistent communications with staff on OH&S matters.

The Officer develops and maintains productive partnerships with a broad range of colleagues, partners and stakeholders throughout the department, the Northwest Territories and nationally, including Worker's Safety and Compensation Divisions, Department of Finance/Human Resources, the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center and other provincial and territorial OH&S staff.

The Officer is required to exercise discretion and use consistent judgment in carrying out their responsibilities. This requires a high level of competence, technical knowledge, and other skills such as risk management, strong communication, investigative, conflict resolution and relationship building. This level of competence requires substantial and ongoing training.

The Officer provides advice and feedback in the development of procedures and guidelines relating to all safety aspects of the wildfire program.

The Officer will be expected to support the wildfire program in various roles and be available for deployment, both nationally and internationally, on Incident Management Teams during the wildfire season (May 1 – September 30) for between 7 and 19 consecutive days.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Leads and coordinates the day-to-day safety management requirements for the Forest Management Division.**

- Oversees and supports the on-going development and maintenance of Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) policies, strategies and plans that promote health and safety, and wellness, and prevent or reduce the risk of accidents or injury for fire and forestry operations.



- Regularly reviews and be familiar with all applicable legislation and applicable standards, to ensure compliance with the *Safety Act* and the Occupational Health & Safety Regulations.
- Researches OH&S trends and emerging leading practices in other jurisdictions.
- Administers the Division's Safety Management System (SMS) to ensure a safe work environment.
- Collaborates with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (WSCC) and ECC Compliance and Officer Services Unit on the implementation of the SMS.
- Completes annual compliance reviews and reports.
- Drafts briefing notes and reports regarding ECC OH&S and wellness programs.
- Reviews current and proposed Forest Management documents, manuals and guidelines and provides directions on safety requirements and wording.
- Supports the implementation of Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) policies related to mental health, harassment, and codes of conduct.
- Coordinates with the GNWT's Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) on matters related to physical and psychological health.
- Serves as the lead representative for FMD on the critical incident stress management program.
- Implements the internal incident/hazard reporting system for ECC on behalf of FMD.
- Completes incident reporting to WSCC and Canada Labour Program for divisional incidents.
- Completes FMD specific formal hazard assessments.
- Leads the triannual audit of the divisional SMS.

**2. Provides training and outreach to forest management staff on safety and reporting of incidents.**

- Promotes the implementation of workplace safety practices for the Forest Management Division by coaching and mentoring fire operations staff on OH&S programs within FMD and five regions.
- Provides effective tools and resources to supervisors, managers and senior managers on various OH&S related activities including the interpretation, application and compliance of related act and regulations, collective bargaining agreements, government policies and OH&S best practices.
- Informs the Regional and FMD Managers of any new or conflicting legislative matters that could impact the division.
- Undertakes initiatives to encourage briefings, after action reviews and reporting or accidents, injuries and near misses.
- Facilitates after action reviews.
- Leads the development and editing of manuals, standard training procedures and LMS training platform content for FMD.



- Undertakes safety training for FMD staff in accordance with the divisional training plan.
- Develops, implements, reviews and analyses systems that includes elements of rapid lesson sharing, lessons learned review, facilitate learning analysis and safety bulletins.
- Leads initiatives related to physical health, hygiene, and nutrition.
- Monitors the ongoing implementation of OH&S activities through feedback forms, surveys, and regular updates.

**3. Provides support to headquarters, regional offices, and incident management teams in delivering the departmental and divisional safety management system.**

- Provides expert advice to all FMD employees on health and safety legislation, policies, and practices.
- Regularly audits compliance of fire operations staff to the SMS including standard operating procedures and guidelines.
- Analyzes incidence and hazard reports to improve risk management within the Division.
- Develops processes and procedures to monitor the effectiveness of OH&S programs and propose and implement corrective action as necessary.
- Participates in the development and implementation of communication strategies that support compliance with OHS legislation and policies, as well as awareness of wellness programs and training opportunities.
- Leads in the investigation of incidents to determine root cause, and corrective actions where necessary.
- Coordinates FMD response to safety issues with the Safety and Training Officer of the ECC Compliance and Officer Services Unit.
- Leads the territorial Forest Management health and safety committee in line with current practices and policies.
- Acts as a Safety Officer on incident management teams.

**4. Represents the Forest Management Division on territorial, national, and international safety committees and working groups.**

- Represents the Division on the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Represents the Forest Management Division on the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center Health Safety and Wellness Community of Practice.
- Represents the Division and/or Department at meetings, workshops, and symposiums.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Physical Demands**

The incumbent is required to conduct field work which could involve long days, walking long distances in wet, cold, hot or insect infested situations. Position involves travel to remote communities or work sites up to 19 days. Occasionally required to drive long distances, up to 8 hours at one time.



### **Environmental Conditions**

The incumbent may be exposed to noise, smoke and intense heat from wildfire. When performing responsibilities outside of the office environment, the incumbent may be required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Working in the wilderness imposes numerous hazards including working around active wildfires and in areas inhabited by bears and other wildlife.

### **Sensory Demands**

A high level of attention is required while undertaking safety audits under stressful situations in the field and related workplaces. There are continuous distractions when conducting the field activities from machine noise, natural elements, and other workers.

### **Mental Demands**

There are frequent stressful circumstances where the incumbent must manage multiple tasks and see the OH&S program through to delivery. The incumbent is required to review and absorb complex legislation, policies, and guidelines, relate them to department staff, and ensure compliance, often during stressful and active wildfire response.

The incumbent may have to deal with staff suffering from trauma and other mental health issues, and to investigate serious workplace incidents resulting in serious injuries or death. They must keep this information confidential leading to feelings of isolation.

Frequent air travel throughout the NWT upwards of 6-8 times per year for upwards to a week at a time and possibly nationally. Deployments on incident management teams may result in disruption to home routines and significant mental stress due to long working hours over evenings and weekends.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of the Incident Command System, wildfire behavior, and wildfire operations.
- Knowledge of relevant legislation, regulation, and policy such as health and safety, dangerous goods, WHIMIS and other territorial and federal governing legislation
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.
- Ability to develop and express analyses, ideas, concepts, judgments and recommendations to professionals and lay people in a clear and concise manner using appropriate verbal, written and graphic means.
- Knowledge and ability to apply exemplary practices in the area of health, wellness, and safety.



- Project management and coordination skills, including ability to organize, prioritize, and work with deadlines under time pressures.
- Strategic and critical thinking skills and judgement to assess program performance and provide advice and recommendations to staff.
- Skills in planning, organizing, and coordinating multiple projects with other organizations and within the Department.
- Oral, written and people skills.
- Problem-solving skills.
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to work well in a team environment.
- Ability to work independently and without close supervision in a cooperative environment both within the department and external to the department.
- Ability to read, interpret and apply codes standards and regulations.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

A university degree in a related field such as occupational health and safety, business or public administration, human resources, natural or social sciences, with a minimum of two (2) years' experience in OH&S, safety programs, incident investigations and reporting, and interpretation and application of safety legislation and policies.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Position Security (check one)**

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☒ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

**French language (check one if applicable)**

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)  
Level required for this Designated Position is:  
ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION  
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐  
READING COMPREHENSION:  
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐  
WRITING SKILLS:  
Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☐ French preferred



**Indigenous language:** Select language

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred