

BECOMING A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL FORESTER

What is a Registered Professional Forester?

A Registered Professional Forester (RPF) is a person knowledgeable in a wide range of studies such as biology, ecology, entomology, geology, hydrology, dendrology, silviculture, engineering, business administration, forest economics, and other natural resource subjects. RPFs use their well-rounded education and experience to maintain the sustainability of forest resources like timber, forage, wildlife, water, and outdoor recreation to meet the needs of the people while protecting the biological integrity and quality of the forest environment.

Why California needs Registered Professional Foresters?

California possesses vast and valuable forest resources. The State ranks second in the Nation in total forest land. It has a wide range of climates, elevations, slopes, geology, and vegetation conditions, so its forest resources are naturally quite diverse as well as very precious.

Humans lay a heavy burden on forest resources which provide people with many essential goods from drinking water to paper products. Forests can provide a wide range of renewable commodities provided that proper management is taken. Registered Professional Foresters are charged with the care and management of California's forests.

What are the Qualifications to become a Registered Professional Forester?

The terms and conditions for becoming a Registered Professional Forester are explained in greater detail in the California Code of Regulations. Minimum qualifications include:

- a) Good moral character and a good reputation for honesty and integrity.
- b) Seven years of experience in forestry work (three years of which must be having charge of forestry work or be under the supervision of an RPF). An increasing level of responsibility and experience must be demonstrated.
- c) Pass the comprehensive examination administered by the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) with a score of 75% or greater.

A person may substitute a Bachelor of Science in Forestry degree or a Bachelor of Science degree with a Major in Forestry for four years of work experience. A Master of Forestry, in combination with a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree majoring in a field other than forestry, can also be used in lieu of four years of forestry work experience.

An Application for Registration and License as a Professional Forester must be filed with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection before an applicant can be scheduled for examination. An individual is eligible to be licensed after passing the exam with a score of 75% or better.

The Professional Foresters Law also provides for certification in particular fields [PRC §752]. A similar process to becoming a Registered Professional Forester applies to becoming a Certified Specialist, but the test is more specific to the field of specialization. Currently, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has established only one specialty, that of the **Certified Rangeland Manager**.