



Purpose:	To define a retention that would satisfy Council criteria to generally accept a request for exemption to the Private Managed Forest Land Council Regulation section 31 with respect to reforestation obligations after commercial thinning operations.
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Reference:	<i>Private Managed Forest Land Act (the Act)</i> Section 5: Object of council Sections 12 to 16: Management objectives on private managed forest land Private Managed Forest Land Council Regulation (Council Regulation) Section 4: Council may make exemptions with or without conditions Section 31: Reforestation of areas where timber harvested or destroyed
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Background:	Commercial thinning is an intermediate partial cutting timber harvesting activity. Council Regulation section 31 requires restocking and establishment of successfully regenerated stands for land where timber harvesting has been completed. Definitions for 'restock' and 'successfully regenerated stand' require a stand of trees that contains a defined minimum number of crop trees per hectare. Commercial thinning operations may be planned for multiple goals including to: improve stand condition; provide access to fibre; enhance future timber values; enhance wildlife or biodiversity values; capture tree mortality; and modify stand structure to reduce wildfire risk. Council Regulation section 31 minimum crop tree reforestation requirements do not accommodate commercial thinning goals in some circumstances. Managed forest landowners may request an exemption to Council Regulation section 31 where requirements defined in the definitions for restock and successfully regenerated will not be met following commercial thinning.
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Policy:	If Council Regulation section 31 restocking and successful regeneration obligations will not be met following commercial thinning, landowners must apply for exemption to section 31 prior to the section 31(3) reforestation timeframes. Council will consider an exemption request on its own merits. With respect to assessing reforestation of areas where commercial thinning has occurred, Council policy is the following post commercial thin criteria will generally be accepted in an exemption request: 1. Stands contain at least: a) 20 square metres basal area OR 300 stems per hectare of crop trees, reasonably well distributed across the disturbed area, and b) Contiguous understocked areas are each less than one hectare 2. Post commercial thinning stocking must be assessed and reported to Council between twelve months and twenty-four months post harvest to confirm the above criteria continue to be met. Understocked areas one hectare or greater are subject to Council Regulation section 31 reforestation obligations.
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