

Lookout – Subsidiary 5

APS Benchmark Listings

Sub. No.	Bench- mark	Department	Working Title Job Title	Know-How				Creativity/ Problem Solving		Responsibility		Total Points
				Prof./ Cont.	Comp. Div.	H.R. Skills	Points	%	Points	Profile	Points	
Lookout (Point Range 98 - 113)												
005	052LO01	Forestry and Parks	Lookout Observer	C	T	1	76	19	14	R1	16	106

Last Review / Update: October 2024

Subsidiary 5

Benchmark Evaluation – 052LO01

Identification Section

Working Title:	Lookout Observer
Department:	Forestry and Parks
Division, Branch/Unit:	Forestry Division, Wildfire Management Branch
Reports To:	Forest Officer
Levels to D.M.:	7
Job Description:	052LO01
Minimum Recruitment Standard:	See Minimum Recruitment Standards for Lookout
Job Code:	052LO - Lookout

Comments on Role

The position is responsible for providing early and accurate reporting of all potential smoke and fire within the local fire lookout area from a lookout tower. It monitors the progress and fire behaviour until fire control personnel arrive at the fire location. It observes weather conditions and provides updates to the fire centre staff. The position monitors authorized fires under permit, and communicates information between fire camps, field staff, and aircraft units as needed. The position is responsible for performing routine maintenance on buildings, equipment, and the lookout site.

Evaluation

Knowledge	Creativity / Problem Solving	Responsibility	Total Job Points
C T 1 76	19% 14	R1 16	106

Comments on Evaluation

- **Knowledge:**

Professional/Content Knowledge:

The Lookout Observer requires knowledge of fire and smoke detection techniques. The position requires an understanding of visibility, clouds, showers, temperature readings, rain, hail, and the colour of smoke, gained through in-service training. It must be familiar with the standard operations and maintenance of site equipment. On-the-job training and manuals define the expectations of the position.

Complexity and Diversity:

The position primarily operates independently. Fires detected will be reported to fire control personnel to extinguish. The position is task focused and duties are generally routine, supporting a T rating.

Human Relations Skill:

The position exchanges fire detection information with fire control personnel, supporting a 1 rating. This position does not need to influence the behaviour of others and therefore does not warrant a 2 rating.

▪ Creativity/Problem Solving:

Problems encountered involve equipment malfunctioning or communication issues. The position will perform minor maintenance and repairs to equipment as needed. Guidance and solutions are identified within well-defined procedures and manuals. Access to assistance is available.

▪ Responsibility:

This is a service delivery role where timely detection and communication with others is critical for timely wildfire response.

Last Reviewed: October 2024

Subsidiary 5 Benchmark

Job Description – 052LO01

Purpose

(Brief summary of the job, covering the main responsibilities, the framework within which the job has to operate and the main contribution to the organization.)

The priority for this job is to provide early and accurate reporting of all potential smoke and fire within the visible and indirectly visible area of responsibility of the fire lookout. Furthermore, an observer monitors the progress and fire behaviour of the smoke or fire until fire control personnel arrive at the fire location. An observer reports various weather conditions and lightning to the fire centre, monitors authorized fires under permits and acts as a communication relay between fire camps, field staff, and aircraft as required, performs routine maintenance on buildings, equipment and to the site.

Responsibilities and Activities

(The purpose of the job can be broken down in different responsibilities and end results. Each end result shows what the job is accountable for, within what framework and what the added value is. Normally a job has 4-8 core end results. For each end result, approximately 3 major activities should be described.)

- Early and accurate reporting of all potential smoke and fire within the lookout's area of responsibility. This work enables the fire centre to respond quickly and capitalize on the opportunity to protect human life, minimize wildfire size, and reduce damage. The observer monitors their area of responsibility for smoke and fire that does not belong in that area. To achieve this, the observer reviews fire permits to ensure this fire is not permitted, and utilizes the instruments provided to pinpoint the location, and relays by radio the information to the fire centre.
- Continuous observation on the progress and behaviour of the smoke or fire until fire control personnel arrive at the fire location. This is done to inform the duty officer of present and anticipated fire behaviour; thus, proper resources can be dispatched to the fire location. The observer utilizes weather and fire behaviour training to provide valuable wildfire behaviour information to the duty officer.
- Record and report all unauthorized smokes, all lightning, and monitor authorized fires under permit, by radio to the area. This is done to keep records of initial fire behaviour, and respective fire location. Informing of lightning is to initiate patrols, and the monitoring of permitted smokes is to ensure permit conditions are being met and also to provide notice if fire behaviour suddenly changes.
- Act as communication relay between fire camps, field staff, aircraft, etc. This job assists the fire agency to receive communications when the normal means are not adequate due to mechanical/electrical issues, terrain or other physical or environmental disturbances. This is very important to ensure safety and clarity in wildfire operations.
- Perform routine maintenance to facility, yard, buildings, and equipment. This work is necessary to ensure all aspects of the fire lookout site are safe, operational, and maintained so the site looks professional.
- Contacting assigned "buddy" or the fire centre to inform when climbing up or down from their tower or when leaving and returning to their site. This is a very important piece of communication to ensure the safety of the observer and if required, to aide in quick response of emergency plan activation.

Scope

(List specific information that illustrates what internal or external areas the job impacts, and the diversity, complexity, and creativity of the job.)

Typical problems solved:

- Observe for wildfire smoke and distinguish it from false smoke reporting of other elements such as road dust, pollen, low cloud, reflection and from permitted smokes.
- Observing and reporting of weather information to keep the duty officer informed of what is happening in the field.
- Facility maintenance and repairs-Utilize various tools in a safe manner to perform various jobs around

the site such as lawn maintenance, sanding, and painting of surfaces, and performing minor mechanical maintenance and troubleshooting on items such as a power generator, lawnmower, deck, etc.

Types of guidance available for problem solving:

The lookout observer attends a seven-day training course at the Hinton Training Centre and the lookout observer manual is the main material for guidance and problem solving. Additional guidance can come from equipment manuals on site, the detection aide, the lookout supervisor, the fire centre or area staff, folks from the telecoms and construction and maintenance unit and ultimately from the provincial detection unit in Edmonton.

Direct or indirect impacts of decisions:

- Missing/not finding and reporting a wildfire is the worst-case scenario where a wildfire can get a chance to grow and cause much damage and ultimately cost much more to control/extinguish.
- Equipment damage from improper use or lack of maintenance.
- Personal injury or death from not following proper safety procedures or wearing personal protective equipment.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

(Provide a list of the most important knowledge factors, skills and abilities including knowledge about practical procedures, specialized techniques, etc.; analytical and conceptual skills and abilities; and skills needed for direct interaction with others not only diplomas and degrees. Specific training if it is an occupational certification/registration required for the job.)

- On the job training provided and must be physically able to perform the work.

Contacts

(The main contacts of this position and the purpose of those contacts.)

- For the most part a lookout observer works in isolation. The main interactions come by the use of a radio or a phone to talk with fellow lookout observers, the detection aide, and their supervisor or staff within the fire centre. Safety checks and duties have set time intervals, all other communication can take place as needed.

Supervision Exercised

No Supervision.