

**NON-MANAGEMENT JOB DESCRIPTION
POINT RATING EVALUATION PLAN**

Working Title Wildfire Operations Officer		Name	
Position Number	Reports to Position No., Class & Level	Division, Branch/Unit	Ministry Forestry and Parks
Present Class		Requested Class	
Dept ID	Program Code	Project Code (if applicable)	

PURPOSE: Give a 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 (see Non-Management Job Description Writing Guide [Pages 7-8](#)).

This position provides leadership for the wildfire operations program in the assigned forest area. Wildfires have the potential to range from catastrophic to providing an ecological benefit depending on location and circumstances. Through supervision of staff members and direction of diverse resources, the Wildfire Operations Officer plans and coordinates the wildfire operations program for the forest area with the goal of minimizing wildfire losses while ensuring alignment with provincial fire management objectives and legislative authorities. This position ensures appropriate resources are available to respond to wildfire situations through accountability for program planning, resource management, value analysis in collaboration with stakeholders and partners, training, communications, and stakeholder relations functions.

As a member of the forest area leadership team, the Wildfire Operations Officer contributes significantly to the development, implementation, and evaluation of strategic and operational plans, budget planning, and the integration of forest and wildfire management practises within the area. In addition, this position provides expert advice and significant contributions essential to achieving consistent wildfire management program planning and delivery at the provincial level. The Wildfire Operations Officer participates in the ongoing review and enhancement of department business rules, policies, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) as well as the development and implementation of provincial operational wildfire management plans and programs.

This position leads and participates in working groups, task forces, and committees to develop new and enhanced approaches and training initiatives to meet and exceed wildfire management operational expectations and business goals at the provincial level. In addition, the Wildfire Operations Officer leads and/or participates in special provincial incident management teams during situations of extreme wildfire activity. This position is relied on to provide direction and expert advice to ensure the safety of firefighters and protection of human life, communities, watersheds, natural resources, and infrastructure while mitigating fire losses on crown and private lands during these incidents.

The planning and delivery of wildfire operations programs at the local forest area and provincially requires the Wildfire Operations Officer to develop effective working relationships with diverse partners and stakeholders, including department and Alberta government staff members, other levels of government, the tourism and utilities sectors, timber companies, trappers, outfitters, research providers, and Albertans. Reporting to the Forest Area Manager, this position functions within the parameters of relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

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 3-6 activities should be described (see Writing Guide [Pages 9-10](#)).

1. Wildfire operations priorities are established and associated operations are planned and managed within the forest

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area to ensure consistency with relevant strategies, tactics, policies, and the Strategic Wildfire Management Plan.

Activities:

- Plans, directs, and monitors wildfire operations program for the forest area to ensure alignment with business plan parameters; continually analyzes and updates plans to ensure cost-effective fire control actions and coordinates wildfire operations resources and activities to ensure department performance measures, objectives, and Strategic Wildfire Management Plan goals are met or exceeded.
- Oversees and monitors airstrips, facilities, and fuel caches in the forest area to ensure they are maintained and operated in accordance with legislation and applicable aviation and department standards.
- Oversees and monitors hiring of fixed wing, light, and intermediary rotary wing aircraft and heavy equipment to ensure alignment with applicable department practices.
- Oversees airtanker base leases and maintains working relationship with local airport authorities.
- Coordinates and monitors the use of air attack in the area to ensure adherence to policy and SOPs and that operations are carried out in a cost-effective manner.
- Plans area warehouse operations to ensure sufficient equipment and supplies are available on ongoing basis and during critical fire periods.
- Plans, establishes, and coordinates vehicle fleet needs for the forest area.
- Plans, establishes, and coordinates food service contracts for primary and secondary staging camps.
- Develops fire management facility construction and maintenance plans in conjunction with Provincial Construction and Maintenance Program, with facilities including fire bases, airtanker bases and remote weather stations.
- Oversees maintenance of lookout facilities, hiring of lookout staff, and monitoring of the effectiveness of the fixed detection program in the area; supplements fixed detection with aerial detection as required.
- Plans and coordinates annual escaped fire plan for the forest area.
- Creates and coordinates emergency response plan for the forest area and ensures all affected individuals are aware of the document and process.
- Oversees and monitors operation of the forest area fire centre to ensure adherence to policy in relation to scheduling duty officers, dispatchers, and administrative staff and that all decision support systems (e.g., Spatial Fire Management System - SMFS, Dispatch – Resource Tracking System, Fire Information Resource Equipment System - FIRES, Fire Behaviour Prediction Models – FBP 97, and Lightning Location Protection - LLP) are appropriately utilized and achieving effective results.
- Assesses daily pre-suppression and suppression planning to ensure that proper resources are in place and appropriate strategy is followed to suppress fires.
- Coordinates timely communication of pre-suppression and suppression information to stakeholders.
- Develops and maintains fire communication system for the forest area and monitors and ensures proper usage.
- Ensures fire intelligence is valid and entered into appropriate database in timely manner.
- Monitors and audits contracts and financial transactions and reporting associated with wildfire operations program.
- Ensures adherence to notification matrix when advising senior management of issues and forwarding accurate information in a timely manner.
- Works with Alberta Environment and Parks to ensure business support functions associated with the wildfire operations program and as defined in the Service Level Agreement are completed.

2. Staff members within the wildfire operations section and other associated human resources within the forest area are provided with leadership and training to ensure efficient and effective execution of the wildfire operations program.

Activities:

- Supervises permanent staff members (e.g., recruitment; performance planning and management; clarification of roles and responsibilities; succession planning).
- Facilitates identification and resolution of human resource-related issues within the wildfire operations section.
- Develops and coordinates implementation of annual training plan for staff members.
- Establishes parameters for contract positions; provides leadership to and assesses contract personnel.
- Completes annual certification reviews for Forestry Division, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Department, Alberta Environment and Parks Department, and industry contract staff to identify training and educational requirements.
- Establishes organizational structure for wildfire operations section to address in-season and off-season workload.
- Communicates with staff and contractors to ensure understanding of policy, SOPs, and business rules.

3. The forest area leadership team is provided with active participation and contributions to support planning and delivery

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of integrated wildfire management, wildfire prevention, and forest management programs.

Activities:

- Contributes to development of forest area plans and budgets, including input to determine priorities for the maintenance and repair of infrastructure.
- Participates in development, implementation, and monitoring of the Forest Area Wildfire Management Plan.
- Reviews, provides input to, and implements Wildfire Mutual Aid Agreements and Plans.
- Reviews and provides input to Industry Fire Control Agreements / Plans.
- Reviews, approves, and implements burn plans for various landscape levels within the forest area.
- Provides direction and expertise to forest area leadership team and staff on prescribed burn projects, fuel management, smoke management, hazard abatement, and aviation management.
- Provides fire management and prescribed burn training opportunities for forest area staff (prescribed fire has evolved from small, hazard reduction burns to large complex burns for varied objectives, with wildfire operations conducting the prescribed fires in coordination with partner and stakeholder agencies).
- Provides expertise and assistance in relation to fire investigation, court, and cost recovery activities.
- Provides training and facilitates assignment of wildfire operations staff to wildfire prevention and forest management activities to support forest area needs and staff development initiatives.

4. Leadership and expertise are provided at the provincial level to facilitate strategic wildfire operations program planning, consistent interpretation of legislation and policy, and development of wildfire management programs, SOPs, and business rules for the department.

Activities:

- Participates in provincial Wildfire Operations Group meetings.
- Chairs and/or participates in subsidiary working groups and task forces as mandated under the Wildfire Operations Group Terms of Reference, including preparing and submitting reports on mandated initiatives.
- Collaborates in the development of policy, business rules, and SOPs and provides input to development of the Strategic Wildfire Management Plan and goals.
- Contributes to establishment of provincial contract parameters (e.g., fireline catering, security, medical, personal service contracts).
- Participates in provision of provincial fire training programs at the Hinton Training Centre as course chair, unit leader, and/or instructor.

5. Special provincial incident command teams formed to contain and suppress escaped wildfires and limit impacts to stakeholders are provided with leadership, expertise, and contributions.

Activities:

- Maintains certification levels to enable participation on incident command teams.
- Provides knowledge and expertise relating to annual establishment of incident command teams.
- Mentors and coaches incident command team members.

6. Wildfire assessments / audits and after action reviews are provided with leadership and expertise.

Activities:

- Works with incident command teams to conduct wildfire assessments and determine consistent application of policy, SOPs, and business practices throughout escaped wildfires.
- Proposes and implements changes to correct inconsistencies in wildfire operations delivery.
- Prepares in-depth reviews and reports on large escaped wildfires.
- Determines appropriate responses to escaped fire reviews within the assigned forest area and takes corrective action in response to review findings.

7. Collaborative relationships are established with stakeholders (e.g., Indigenous persons, municipalities, agencies, and

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timber, oil and gas, electrical, and rail industries), the forest industry, and private sector organizations to distribute information, resolve issues and advocate for compliance with and participation in wildfire management programs.

Activities:

- Liaises with local aircraft companies to facilitate policy and information transfer and resolve issues
- Liaises with local heavy equipment contractors and manpower contractors to ensure contract changes and department policies are communicated and resolve concerns or issues.
- Participates in meetings with local FMA holders and industry stakeholders to develop and foster partnerships and exchange relevant information.
- Collaborates with local Indigenous peoples and communities to provide training and employment opportunities and discuss and resolve issues relating to wildfire operations.
- Promotes and participates in inter-agency meetings to explain and discuss wildfire management programs.
- Participates in inter-agency mock disasters and table top exercises to facilitate working relationships, address deficiencies, and enhance processes.
- Works with local governments and industry to provide wildfire operations-related training programs.
- Promotes and supports cross-training opportunities with stakeholders.
- Sponsors out of service personnel within the forest area for training to expand knowledge and experience base.
- Plans and coordinates inspections to ensure compliance to legislated mandate and alignment to business plan.
- Promotes, plans, and participates in public involvement programs and initiatives.
- Responds to public and industry inquiries regarding wildfire management practices and issues.
- Responds to requests from educational institutions for career and educational information.
- Collaborates with adjoining authorities to maintain border zone agreements (e.g., Federal Parks, British Columbia, INAC, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories).

8. Ministerial Orders are responded to and department interests are represented in relation to local and provincial wildfire issues and wildfire management program delivery.

Activities:

- Responds to and resolves issues raised by MLAs, local municipalities, public, and other stakeholders and prepares briefings in response to issues as required.
- Responds to FOIP requests related to wildfire management activities.
- Provides expert advice in support of conflict resolution; attends disclosures / courtroom proceedings as required.
- Attends meetings, briefings, and town or county councils to provide information on wildfire response.
- Participates on committees and working groups to provide expertise in relation to wildfire management.
- Work with Forest Area Information Officer to ensure department messaging relating to wildfire management is delivered effectively within the local forest area.

SCOPE: List specific information that illustrates the challenges, problem solving and creativity requirements and decision making capacity of the position. Also identify the internal or external areas the job impacts (see Writing Guide [Pages 11-12](#)).

The Wildfire Operations Officer plans, organizes, and leads professional staff members, contractors, seasonal hires, and diverse resources and services to deliver the wildfire operations program within the assigned forest area. This position plans and organizes multiple functions to ensure that the forest area is prepared to manage fires in accordance with legislation, policy, program parameters, and performance measures. This includes developing pre-suppression systems, guidelines, and protocols as well as ensuring adequate resources are in place to deal with fire starts through determination and strategic placement of resources to protect values at risk.

In addition, the Wildfire Operations Officer determines appropriate suppression strategies by comparing the value of resources at risk to costs of suppressing fires and consideration of environmental, social, and political implications of decisions. As the fire season progresses, this position continues to make decisions pertaining to resource utilization and re-assignment, priorities, and firefighting tactics and strategy. The Wildfire Operations Officer is relied on to apply highly specialized knowledge and expertise to continually monitor and respond to changing conditions and circumstances to meet the challenges of wildfire operations program delivery.

This position must develop effective relationships with multiple stakeholders and partners to effectively deliver the wildfire

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operations program within the forest area. Given the nature of wildfire management and realities of human resource and financial restraints, resource levels rarely meet resource requirements during extreme pre-suppression and suppression activities. The Wildfire Operations Officer must develop a suitable organization structure, initiate and maintain effective relationships, collaborate with others, and engage external resources to effectively address wildfire operations requirements. In addition, this position must manage associated training and certification programs and develop innovative approaches to wildfire operations program delivery.

The Wildfire Operations Officer is continually challenged with complex decisions that can directly impact multiple stakeholders. This position oversees the delivery of immediate, effective, and ongoing communications with stakeholders on the landscape in extreme fire situations, provides expertise and advice during emergency response situations when dealing with wildfires threatening communities and major infrastructure, and provides input and recommendations regarding evacuation situations. The Wildfire Operations Officer establishes priorities in multi-wildfire situations where the safety and protection of lives, communities, infrastructure, and resources have to be balanced with available resources. Consequences of decisions can have profound and long lasting social and environmental impacts (e.g., loss of lives and homes, destruction to watershed and/or devastation of resources such as timber and/or recreation) and severe impacts on local economies.

Decisions are also made in relation to planning and managing large volumes of staff, aircraft, and associated firefighting resources and the logistics of moving resources to remote locations cost effectively and efficiently. The annual budget for routine operations is approximately \$1 million dollars; however, if a large escaped fire occurs the impact to financial resources can range from hundreds of thousands to tens of millions of dollars depending on the severity of the fire. Economic impacts to local economies are difficult to measure, but can easily exceed dollars spent to control the fire.

Resource management decisions extend to large amounts of contracted equipment and manpower and include ensuring contract requirements are met and the most suitable resources are used in relation to situations faced. In addition, this position must ensure staff follow established wildfire management program guidelines and procedures. This poses a challenge given that the majority of staff supervised are seasonal, contract, and emergency and have varying degrees of knowledge and experience related to responsibilities. The Wildfire Operations Officer must continually monitor operations and oversee provision of training, mentoring, and coaching to achieve consistent application of guidelines and results.

Wildfire operations can carry significant risk of accidents and this position is responsible to ensure all wildfire operations adhere to Occupational Health and Safety legislation, policy, and department practices. The broadly varied backgrounds of staff and contractors require considerable coordination to ensure all practices are understood and followed.

Adding to the scope and complexity of this position are its accountabilities at the provincial level. As a member of the Provincial Operations Group, the Wildfire Operations Officer works with colleagues to establish new policies or practices, facilitate more effective operations, and ensure provincial consistency in the delivery of wildfire management programs. This position applies extensive knowledge and expertise of fire operations and fire science to the development and updating of policies, SOPs, and business rules based on analysis of issues arising throughout the fire season. The Wildfire Operations Officer also provides recommendations and supports the development of research relating to wildfire management, including working closely with researchers and science-based staff to use and evaluate new strategies, equipment or technologies.

When participating in provincial incident command teams, this position demonstrates strong leadership in relation to major fire situations, including provision of direction and information to fire fighting and support staff, politicians, media, communities, and stakeholders. Decisions must be made quickly and have potential for extensive impacts to public safety or communities.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES: Include information on required diplomas and degrees along with identifying the most important knowledge factors, including knowledge about practical procedures, administrative, technical or professional techniques, technical, scientific or program related processes, etc. Detail specific training if there is an occupational certification/registration requirement for the position. Specify the type of experience required for the position (see Writing Guide [Pages 12-14](#)).

The Wildfire Operations Officer requires extensive knowledge and understanding of:

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- wildfire management principles, including advanced knowledge of related legislation, regulations, programs, policy, SOPs, and business rules and practices
- fire behaviour, including advanced knowledge in area of fuels, weather, and topography
- fire detection, preparedness, suppression, control, and command principles, methodologies, regulations, and/or tactics
- science-based decision support systems such as SFMS, RTS, FIRES, and LLP
- meteorology and effects on wildfire
- environmental impacts of wildfire and remedial courses of action
- aircraft management
- soil science, forest dendrology, vegetation management, and reclamation methods and standards
- relevant provincial and federal acts and regulations, planning processes, and legal requirements (e.g., *Forests Act, Public Lands Act, Forest and Prairie Protection Act, East Slopes Policy, Water Act, Migratory Birds Convention Act, Recreation Act, Timber Regulations, Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, Minerals Act*, etc.)

as well as sound and demonstrated understanding of:

- forest tenure systems in Alberta, including forest management agreements, quota systems, and timber use
- basic statistics and some knowledge of advanced statistical methods to compile and analyze tabular and spatial data related to fire behaviour and vegetation monitoring data
- forest and fire ecology at fine and broad scales (stands to landscapes) and multi-temporal scales (years / decades / centuries)
- GoA and Department mandate, business goals, and objectives
- Department business plan, organizational structure, responsibilities of program and business areas
- the political environment in which the Department operates and GoA decision-making processes
- issues management, risk management, and change management principles, methodologies and processes
- contract and financial management principles, policies, directives, and guidelines
- human resource management principles, policies, directives, and guidelines, including extensive understanding of relevant collective agreements
- strategic, business, operational, and budget planning principles, directives and guidelines
- program and project planning and management principles and methodologies
- relevant business productivity software and information / data management systems

The Wildfire Operations Officer requires highly developed and demonstrated:

- leadership skills, including ability to lead and manage up to two hundred staff members in stressful situations
- strategic thinking and planning skills along with ability to translate strategies into business and operational plans
- influencing, conflict management, negotiation, and risk mitigation skills
- analytical, critical thinking, and problem solving skills
- interpersonal and relationship management skills to interact effectively with wide range of clients and stakeholders
- verbal and written communication and presentation skills
- program and project planning and management skills, including ability to apply strategies to best utilize limited resources in a complex and diverse environment
- human resource planning and management skills, including ability to mentor and motivate staff
- financial management skills (indirect management of budgets, personnel, and expenses as EO to limit of \$75,000)
- organizational and time management skills, including ability to manage complex tasks and functions simultaneously

The Wildfire Operations Officer must be able to:

- manage multiple resources with extensive value (e.g., tens to hundreds of pieces of heavy equipment and aircraft)
 - teach, coach, and mentor other staff within the department on wildfire science and wildfire suppression
 - plan, organize, and effectively resource facilities such as warehouses, staging camps, helibases, air tanker facilities and other structures to support wildfire operations
 - demonstrate to Department staff and external partners the value of applied wildfire management / fire science data, analysis and tools to business delivery | department staff and external partners
 - deliver understandable technical presentations to partner and planning groups (e.g., public, stakeholders, local authorities) to enhance capacity to make intelligent and evidence-based environmental decisions or recommendations
- continued
- maintain strategic focus while delivering complex and varied results at the operational level

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- function independently as well as lead and contribute effectively within a team environment
- consistently demonstrate flexibility, initiative, professional judgment, political sensitivity, creativity, and ability to work cooperatively and productively with others to achieve goals
- demonstrate high level of self-management and strong results orientation
- work under extreme pressure for long hours and long durations including months at a time

This position requires a related degree or diploma including proven experience in wildfire management or forest management planning and operation.

The Wildfire Operations Officer is expected to maintain current training and expertise in forest, land, recreation, range and wildfire management practices, processes, successes, research, training, etc. and participate in relevant GoA training initiatives (e.g., Management Development Program).

In addition, the Wildfire Operations Officer requires:

- completion of Advanced Wildland Fire Behaviour and Wildfire Behaviour Specialist or equivalent knowledge of courses relating to fire behaviour and the effect of fuels, weather, and topography
- minimum certification level – Type 2 certification at the Section Chief level
- eligibility for Registered Professional Forester / Forest Technologist status with CAPF or CAFPT
- eligibility to become a Commissioner of Oaths for statement taking, signing of declarations etc.
- a clean criminal record to qualify for Expenditure Officer status

CONTACTS: Identify the main contacts the position communicates with and the purpose of the communication (See Writing Guide [Pages 14-15](#)).

The Wildfire Operations Officer has regular and ongoing communication with:

- Forest Area Manager – provide operations updates, plans for resource needs and program changes, and solutions for human resource or other issues
- Forest Area Prevention Officers / Wildfire Management Specialists – provide support and assistance to prevention / specialist groups in relation to forest area programs, including prescribed fires
- Other forest area staff (e.g., Construction and Maintenance Coordinator, Communications Technologist, Senior Forester) – collaborate in setting priorities and contributing resources to other programs in the forest area
- Other Wildfire Operations Officers – collaborate and exchange information to ensure provincial consistency in application of wildfire operations program
- Director, Wildfire Operations and other headquarters representatives – exchange information, clarify program direction, resolve issues, and develop tools to support delivery of wildfire management program
- Executive Director and Assistant Deputy Minister – respond to information requests and executive initiatives, particularly when serving as provincial Duty Officer or managing complex incidents
- First Nations / Metis Settlements – coordinate provision of training, build relationships, and hire staff
- Other GoA departments (e.g., Environment and Parks, Culture and Tourism, Indigenous Relations, Transportation) - share information (general and incident specific)
- Municipalities – share information with municipalities within or bordering the forest area throughout the year and continually during an incident
- Other jurisdictions (e.g., United States Forest Service, BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Parks Canada, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment) – maintain relationships throughout the year and continually share information during an incident

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: List position numbers, class titles, and working titles of positions directly supervised (see Writing Guide [Page 15](#)).

This position supervises the following permanent staff:

- two to three Wildfire Technologists (Natural Resources 7)

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- Area Warehouse Supervisor (Operational Services 5)
- Area Logistics Coordinator (Administrative Support 5)
- Area Wildfire Dispatch Supervisor (Administrative Support 5)

In addition, the Wildfire Operations Officer supervises contract, seasonal, and casual wage staff during fire season. Emergency hiring of personnel typically ranges from 200 to 800 people depending on fire season severity. Contract personnel include firefighters, Dozer Bosses, Wildfire Information Officers, Industry Liaison Officers, and a multitude of equipment contractors. The Wildfire Operations Officer also provides direction and supervision to department staff participating in pre-suppression and suppression activities.

This position provides direction to business support staff within the forest area provided through a shared services agreement to ensure accountabilities related to budgets, occupational health and safety, human resource management, and GIS are delivered appropriately and in compliance with relevant policies and guidelines.

CHANGES SINCE LAST CLASSIFICATION REVIEW: Identify significant changes that have impacted the responsibilities assigned to your position since the last review (see Writing Guide [Pages 15-16](#)).

- Level to Deputy Minister has moved from 4 to 3.
- Forestry Division has achieved Certificate of Recognition (COR) Safety Certification; the Wildfire Operations Officer is responsible for ensuring staff, including seasonal staff, work safely and adhere to the Safety Plan.
- A Unit Crew (20 person seasonal sustained action crew) has been added to the responsibility of the Wildfire Operations Officer.
- Business support staff are housed in a different department, requiring increased communication and diligence to ensure administrative and GIS support meets the needs of the Wildfire Operations Group.
- Mutual Aid Agreements have been signed with most municipalities in the province; the Wildfire Operations Officer is responsible for implementation when a wildfire emergency strikes.
- Implementation of Wildfire Management Plans is in part (response and preparedness) the responsibility of the Wildfire Operations Officer; this may include decisions where modified responses to wildfire are made. This is a significant risk analysis over the practice of initial attack on all fires.
- Training has become more specialized, with the Wildfire Operations Officer expected to develop, chair, and deliver courses through the Hinton Training Centre.
- Large increase in participation of committees and working groups due to the specialization of wildfire management and more severe fire seasons.
- Involved in a large scale department system modernization project.

ORGANIZATION CHART: An organization chart that includes supervisor, peers and staff MUST be attached (see Writing Guide [Page 17](#)).

This information is being collected under the authority of Section 10 of the Public Service Act and will be used to allocate positions within a classification plan and to manage the Alberta government human resources program. If you have any questions about the collection of this information, contact the Job Evaluation Unit, 6th Floor, Peace Hills Trust Tower, 10011 - 109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3S8, phone 780/408-8400 or contact your Ministry Human Resource Office.