



Environmental and Safety Services

Regional Affiliate Certification Group (RACG) GROUP CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION Program Overview

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Sponsored By: Printing Industries of New England, Printing Industries Alliance, Printing and Imaging Association of Mid America, Printing Industries of Ohio/Northern Kentucky, Printing Association of Florida, Printing Industries of the Carolinas, **Printing Industry Midwest**, Printing Industries of Illinois, Printing Industries of the South, Pacific Printing Industries, Graphic Arts Association, and Printing Industries of Michigan, Printing Industries Association of Southern California, Printing and Graphics Association MidAtlantic.

Group certification under the FSC logo is available to qualified, eligible print manufacturing companies who are members in good standing with their sponsoring regional PIA affiliate. Companies applying for group certification must have annual sales less than \$5 million in Forest Product Business (generally commercial printing, package printing, etc). Total sales can exceed \$5 million if there are divisions *separately conducting mailing, website development/hosting, fulfillment, etc.* Sales volumes will be subject to audit by program auditors.

There is no difference between individual certificates and the group certificate as regards the use of the logo, the requirements for organization, and the use of certified papers on projects utilizing the FSC logo.

Because of the aggregating, the costs for certification will be substantially reduced from the single certificate process. The group guidelines allow a subset of all companies to be fully audited (by random) and all participating firms will receive an “internal”, or overview audit on an annual basis. **All firms will be visited.**

The group, RACG, has engaged a Group Manager to provide training, oversight, and operations assistance to all participating members and a separate, certified auditing firm will conduct the full audits. Using his experience and knowledge, our group manager will be able to reduce the time and effort currently required of individual certificate holders and applicants. He will assist participating companies in reducing the administrative burden of initial and ongoing FSC certification. Paul Gutkowski, on PIM’s staff, will be a resource and advocate for this program as well. Feel free to contact us throughout your involvement for assistance.

Revised January, 2011



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Interested member companies need to complete and submit the **Group Participation Form, and fee.** This form should be submitted to PIM, who is acting as the group coordinator and will transmit your information to the group manager. Because of the dynamic nature of this group, additions to the group other than at renewal time may be limited so lead-time is important. Companies can generally be joined to the group within 4 weeks of receipt of enrollment form and check by the group.

Group FSC certification fees are \$1,695 per year inclusive of travel for auditors and group managers. Companies interested in joining the group are requested to submit the full fee with their application in order for us to release forms and to schedule plant visits for certification.

Participating companies will be individually responsible for compliance with conditions relative to utilization of the FSC logo and audit requirements. Any liability for failure to do so will rest solely with the individual non-compliant company and not with the RAGC, its collective participants, or sponsoring organizations.

Participating companies recognize that ongoing participation in RACG is contingent upon maintaining membership in good standing in PIM and complying with all FSC guidelines for Chain of Custody Certification.

If you are interested in participating in the group, please provide the information on the enclosed form and return it with your check, made payable to PIM, to us so we can forward to the group coordinator to initiate the scheduling of your initial visit. For further information or to apply to enroll in RACG, please contact Paul Gutkowski or Pat Barnum at PIM or our group manager Erik Shonstrom.

C O N T A C T S

Group Manager

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Revised January, 2011