



GRADE RIGHT (NZ) LTD

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Combined December 2024 Newsletter

Wood Wise and Grade Right has not produced a Newsletter for a while so thought this would be an appropriate time to get one out before the end of yet another interesting year with a number of things happening around the industry. Grade Right continues to be the largest Auditing body covering verified structural timber, FJ and laminated timber products and preservative treatment in New Zealand while Wood Wise is the largest training provider in Wood Manufacturing – many thanks to our clients and their staff who continue to benefit from this work.

First off, we are delighted to welcome the following companies into the Grade Right's Grade Verified QA Programme:

Claymark Group, Thames who have joined both the Grade Verified QA Programme and the Treat Right QA Programme.

Tumu Timbers, Hastings who were a member a number of years ago and are also a member of our Treat Right QA Programme.

Taylor Timbers of Richmond Nelson who were a member a number of years ago also and getting back into the market for SG timber products.

Grade Right will also begin the monitoring and auditing of Tran Duc Homes in Vietnam for their GL and CLT wood products manufactured from NZ Radiata pine grown in the Central North Island. This adds to our portfolio of overseas clients which include the ARAUCO Vinales site in Chile, ITI Chile, four CMPC sites in Chile and Tropik Wood in Fiji. In Chile, we have Paula Rojas to carry out 3 audits per year of those Chilean sites while Grade Right carries out an annual audit together with calibration of their proof testers. Paula also doubles as our interpreter and does a great job. Our main focus however continues to be NZ wood producers.

Companies continue to choose the Grade Verified, Treat Right and Engineered Wood Products QA Programmes because they enable producers to consistently manufacture compliant timber products using Quality Assurance programmes and auditors that are straight-up, firm, fair and monitoring/auditing processes that visibly are seen to work well. The fact that we respond quickly with good technical advice, promptly analyse and approve new products, providing timely monthly feedback and data analysis and carry out audits that are positive in nature and promote continual improvement mark us out from the rest. There is no point having an auditing body that cannot deliver these good regular outcomes for you as a producer.

We continue to highlight the importance of complying with grading, finger-jointing, lamination and treatment standards and related SOP documents and our objective is to do the monitoring and auditing work in a positive and constructive manner that assists rather than obstructs our clients. We need consumers to view wood products as the best material options available and this means maintaining their confidence in our industry's products. We believe the monthly feedback reports that we provide sites for both the Grade Verified, Treat Right and Engineered Wood Products QA Programmes and the 4-monthly audits provide confirmation that you are compliant and draw attention to any issues that have arisen and need addressing which we will help you resolve these.

2023 and 2024 Graduates from Wood Wise training

We are delighted to announce that in the 2023 calendar year and in the 2024 year-to-date, we have had 66 graduates and 80 graduates respectively complete Solid Wood Manufacturing and Wood Panels qualifications with Wood Wise. Many thanks to all companies that participated in this training and all the very best to these graduates in their future careers in our industry. Remember that the main aim of formally training staff is to equip them with all the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to make the best production, quality, safety and value-adding decisions that overall result in greater value recovery, products that are in spec, fit for purpose and satisfied customers, while at the same time enabling your good reliable staff to gain NZ qualifications and recognition for what they know and can do.

Sixty-six 2023 graduates gained the following qualifications, by company:

Level 5 Manufacturing: 6 (from Northpine Waipu, Rosvalls Whangarei and Waipapa Pine Kerikeri)

Level 4 Timber Machining: 4 (from Belfast Timber Christchurch, Croft Poles and Timber Whangarei, Donelley Sawmillers Reporoa, Mac-Direct Patumahoe, Max Birt Sawmills Pokeno)

Level 4 Sawmilling: 2 (from Kiwi Lumber Putaruru)

Level 4 Finger-Jointing: 2 (from Niagara Sawmilling Invercargill)

Level 4 Treatment: 2 (from OneFortyOne Blenheim, Permapine Broadlands)

Level 3 Timber Machining: 8 (from Donelleys Reporoa, IPL Greymouth, Mt Pokaka Timber Kerikeri, Niagara Sawmilling Invercargill -3, Red Stag Timberlab Auckland, Timpack Ind Nelson)

Level 3 Drying: 4 (from Claymark Te Kuiti, Claymark Thames, Mitchell Bros Darfield, Red Stag Timber Waipa)

Level 3 Treatment: 6 (from McAlpines Rangiora, Niagara Sawmilling Invercargill, Northpine Waipu, OneFortyOne Blenheim)

Level 3 Finger-Jointing: 3 (from Niagara Sawmilling Invercargill)

Level 3 Grading: 7 (from Donelley Sawmill Reporoa, Red Stag Timber Waipa-6)

Level 3 Yarding+Despatch: 1 (from Claymark Te Kuiti)

Level 3 Wood Handling/Distribution: 1 (from Kiwi Lumber Gisborne)

Level 2 Grading: 6 (from Croft Poles Whangarei, Donelley Sawmill Reporoa, Kiwi Lumber Gisborne, Westco Lumber Christchurch)

Level 2 Drying/Treatment: 7 (from Donelley Sawmillers Reporoa, Kiwi Lumber Gisborne, Kiwi Lumber Masterton, Mitchell Bros Darfield, Pinepac Whenuapai, Sequal Lumber Kawerau)

Level 2 Finger-Jointing: 1 (from Otorohanga Timber Co)

Level 2 Foundation Skills: 1 (from GJ Weeks, Tuakau)

2024 year-to-date graduates gained the following qualifications, by company:

Level 4 Timber Machining: 5 (from Red Stag Timberlab Auckland, Southern Pine Products Chch, SRS Chch, Westco Ruatapu, Westimber Chch)

Level 4 Treatment: 4 (Otorohanga Timber, Permapine Reporoa -3)

Level 4 Sawmilling: 8 (from Donelley Sawmillers Reporoa, Kiwi Lumber Gisborne, Kiwi Lumber Putaruru, OneFortyOne Blenheim)

Level 4 Drying:3 (from Claymark Katikati, East Coast Lumber Wairoa, Taranakipine New Plymouth).

Level 4 Finger-Jointing: 2 (from Otorohanga Timber Co.)

Level 4 Timber Grading: 1 (from Kiwi Lumber Dannevirke)

Level 3 Timber Machining: 7 (ITI Timspec Chch, Niagara Timber Invercargill-3, Otorohanga Timber-3)

Level 3 Treatment: 4 (from Red Stag Timber Waipa, Niagara Timber Invercargill)

Level 3 Treatment: 4 (from Red Stag (2), Waipapa Pine Whangarei, Taranakipine New Plymouth)

Level 3 Grading: 9 (from Kiwi Lumber Dannevirke-3, McAlpines Rangiora-2, Mitchell Bros Darfield, Red Stag Timber Waipa-3)

Level 3 Drying: 1 (from McAlpines Rangiora, Northpine Waipu, Red Stag Timber Waipa)

Level 3 Sawmilling: 1 (from Kiwi Lumber Dannevirke)

Level 3 Timber Yarding: 1 (from Otorohanga Timber Co)

Level 3 Wood Panels: 2 (from IPL Greymouth)

Level 2 Timber Machining: 2 (from IPL Greymouth, Otorohanga Timber Co)

Level 2 Grading: 10 (from CHH Nelson (4), Nelson Forests Kaituna (6))

Level 2 Drying/Treatment: 8 (from Claymark Te Kuiti, Clelands Timber New Plymouth, Croft Poles and Timber Kauri, Kiwi Lumber Masterton, Sequal Lumber Kawerau, Taranakipine New Plymouth)

Level 2 Wood Processing: 5 (from Kiwi Lumber Dannevirke-4, Otorohanga Timber Co)

Level 2 Grading:5 (from Kiwi Lumber Dannevirke, Kiwi Lumber Gisborne-4)

Level 2 Sawmilling: 2 (from Kiwi Lumber Gisborne, Otago Lumber Mosgiel)

Level 2 Laminating:1 (from Otorohanga Timber Co)

Current Trainees and Apprentices: We also have over 130 other trainees and apprentices scattered around NZ who will complete their qualification on 2025-2027

Level 5 Manufacturing Courses:

We have delivered 12 Level 5 Manufacturing courses around NZ in the past decade so please consider this course for your key staff, supervisors and QC staff. There are 4 units covered in this course which comprises five 2-day modules spread over 9-10 months and costing \$350/ 2-day module per person in the North Island and \$375/2-day module per person in the South Island.

ID	Domain	Title	Level	Credit
29278	Manufacturing Processes	Audit performance against relevant manufacturing standards and recommend improvements for a manufacturing operation	5	15
29279	Manufacturing Processes	Apply knowledge of key performance indicators to improve production and quality in a manufacturing operation	5	15
29280	Manufacturing Processes	Gather and analyse manufacturing data to resolve production and quality issues in a manufacturing operation	5	20
29281	Manufacturing Processes	Generate, evaluate, scope and present new ideas for improvement in a manufacturing operation	5	20

This is an excellent course and we have had very positive feedback from all participants and their managers, the latter who are invited to the last day of Module 5 for presentations by the participants on a production or quality issue they have investigated and in most cases resolved successfully.

On-Site Training for Machining Apprentices versus TiTC Block Courses.

You will all be aware of the draft decision by Bay of Plenty Polytechnic Toi Ohomai, to close the Timber Industry Training Centre machining and sawdoctoring courses due to these not being financially viable and although the final decision is yet to be made but is imminent, Wood Wise is hoping that the TiTC continues to provide this training in one form or another so that industry clients have a choice about where their staff are trained. There are definite advantages to both types of training with on-site training focussing on training 1-on-1 or 1-on-2 apprentices at a time on their own machining equipment, their own toolroom and profiles, their own timber and procedures while TiTC block courses allow 6-8 apprentices to meet other apprentices, enables time for away-from-work study and to work on planers and profiles potentially different from what they have on their own sites. Talking with machining graduates from the TiTC, the tutors there are as passionate as Wood Wise tutors aiming to upskill, educate and train machinists to their full potential to satisfy industry requirements which is brilliant.

Since early 2022, Wood Wise has been using Shane Bennett to deliver on-site Timber Machining, Finger-Jointing, Lamination and Level 5 Manufacturing training around New Zealand, particularly Timber Machining and Finger-jointing training in the South Island where many companies have decided it is more financially viable and better for Apprentices to be trained on site rather than at the TiTC Rotorua. Shane took over from Mark Stevenson after Mark had worked for Wood Wise for 7 years until fully retiring at the end of 2022. This training by Mark and Shane has been very successful with companies providing a training room and allowing full access to tool rooms and planers/moulders etc during production hours and outside of normal production hours. In some cases, regional machining courses have been held in Canterbury bringing together apprentices from different sites with this training rotated around the sites involved, allowing these apprentices to see other equipment, profiles, procedures etc which again has worked very well and thank you to these participating companies. Both Mark and Shane are former machining tutors at the TiTC and for Shane to work in the South Island delivering a week long block course, he travels on a Sunday afternoon to be able to start work early Monday morning and sometimes stays over a weekend if there is further work in the South Island to avoid extra airfares and possible flight disruptions which seem to be occurring more often.

Even if Toi Ohomai decides to dis-continue TiTC machining and sawdoctoring training, there is a possibility of Wood Wise working with the staff there using a hybrid model of block course training mixed with one week blocks of on-site training and potentially using shorter 2-week blocks at the TiTC. Watch this space and we welcome your comments!

Supervisor Courses: Wood Wise has been using Shane Bennett to also deliver courses aimed at supervisors and would-be supervisors to enable them to do their jobs better and with more knowledge, confidence and with better outcomes. While there are Level 3 and 4 Certificates in Business, companies that have enquired have asked for less theory and more practical hands-on workshops that could be delivered one day every 2-3 months in a region. This enables participants from different sites to come together with a facilitator to cover subjects like:

- Me as a leader, how do I recognise my strengths and weaknesses and then improve.
- Dealing with staff from other cultures and what are some traps for young players.
- Disciplining staff in a pro-active way that achieves positive outcomes.
- Strategies for effective communication with both staff and management.
- Managing people, plant, products, and processes.
- Time management and organisation for new supervisors (how to keep your head above water in a demanding work environment).
- Identifying and leading compliance requirements.
- Problem solving and decision making in a team environment. Root cause analysis.
- Developing workable SOPs.
- Leading team culture improvement. Mentoring and being mentored.
- Dealing with stress and frustration.

To date, these courses have been run for 3 companies in Nelson, 4 companies in Canterbury/West Coast and 4 companies in the Bay of Plenty. Cost is generally \$175 per day per person based on a minimum 6 people attending and based on four one-day sessions spread over 8-10 months. Feedback has been excellent. Contact me if interested.

Training subsidy and costs of providing on-site training around New Zealand.

Many of you will know that training is not cheap and in the past 20 months, we have seen the cost of airfares rise substantially for flights plus accommodation costs have generally increased, particularly over spring and summer months. Airfares from Rotorua to Christchurch return, are often well over \$500 now and to Invercargill can be as high as \$1000 return. Accommodation costs are generally between \$140 and \$180 per night, car rental \$100/day while travel time between Rotorua and Whangarei is 5 hours, same to Dannevirke, 6 hrs to Masterton, 4 hrs to Gisborne and New Plymouth. There continues to be a training subsidy of \$16 per credit available from Competenz so this subsidy is subtracted from the total cost of Wood Wise training. Wood Wise will always try to keep your costs down for on-site training.



Treat Right Update / News---2024-2025

Thank-you to all the Treat right customers for your good work with your compliance and standards work in 2024 and ensuring your products are treated to standard requirements.

2024 saw a struggle in many areas of the market and investigations into new markets and chemicals was common place.

MCA has seen an increase in use and the sites have adapted well and use of low odour solvents and many sites still upgrading their plant for new compliance requirements..

I thank you all for your continued support and positive approach to the compliance of your products and support on any issues that are raised.

I hope 2025 is going to see our Industry grow again and hope that demand for the wide range of products produced by our industry is positive.

To all our clients all the best for the rest of 2024 and into 2025.



Treatment quality continues to be good overall within the industry with many products being “over-treated” in terms of monthly reconciliation data and Grade Right appreciates the work of the excellent technical advisors throughout New Zealand. They help keep the basics on track and ensure issues are dealt with.

General News/Feedback:

1. **Grade Right proof tester calibration** price still \$525+GST which is still cheaper than what other companies carrying out calibration work charge. These calibrations are required to be done annually while a site should be doing a calibration check with their aluminium calibration bar at least fortnightly and recording the results.
2. **New GV product approvals:** These cost \$50 per product with this cost covering the approval analysis and entering this product onto our website on the link to your website plus maintenance costs for our website. Typically, we do not charge for new product approvals in the first year however. Remember the approval analysis is required before you sell any of the new product plus it means we are confirming that the product is in fact “passing” (or otherwise – yes, some have failed and cannot be sold until issue sorted and retesting carried out) before you start selling it – peace of mind for you and us!
3. **Regular visual grade audits** by Grade Right continue for a number of companies throughout NZ. These provide an independent view on how well your graders are doing compared to your grading rules. The objective is to identify what the graders are missing in speed grading so that training can be organised to address these issues. Regular audits (half-day or a day per month or every 2 months) always result in improvements in grading accuracy and consistency through direct feedback – we guarantee this! A half-day audit with report may only cost you \$450+GST depending on where you are located and can comprise random packet grade audits plus recording of grade accuracy/issues around a sawmill sorting table and on-line auditing of drymill graders. Try this option and you will be pleasantly surprised as to the benefits.
4. **Kiln audits:** How well are your kilns run and is there an opportunity to improve systems to reduce Moisture Content variation, prevent over-drying and subsequent loss of value, reduce customer issues etc? Ted Morris can carry out a full kiln review/audit in a day examining practically exactly what happens at your kilns. Ted has been a kiln operator and kiln supervisor/manager in a previous life and over the past 3 years has had a lot to do with Continuous Drying Kilns which are becoming more popular for medium sized operations. So give Ted a ring (027-2463219) or email him (tedm@graderight.co.nz) to discuss your kiln drying needs.
5. **GV clients to respond to GV Audit Reports and Confirmation of Factual Accuracy Forms within 2 weeks.**
We require all Grade Verified customers to respond to their GV Audit Reports by completing the Confirmation of Factual Accuracy Form within 10 working days. This

is to ensure a speedy response if there are issues which need to be resolved but also to ensure there are no long delays in getting these back to us for reconciliation i.e., we want to know you have read the report, agree with the findings (or otherwise) and detail actions (if any) that need to be taken.

Issues that continue to crop up in GV monthly monitoring and GV audits are as follows:

- (a) Products left failing rather than testing another 30 pieces (all of which have to pass) to clear a test failure. A test failure means that any packets produced from the time of the failure cannot be further processed or despatched and instead, have to be put on “Hold” or quarantined. If a failing product goes out the gate, it will inevitably have to be recalled which is worst case scenario. Graphed data must be inspected and “passed” by the “gatekeeper” by initialling and dating the graph and filing this with the raw data sheet. Please note that any packets tested and passing prior to the test failure can be further processed and despatched.
- (b) Note that sending in a Test Failure Form within 48 hours of a Test Failure is required. The form does not have to be completed before it is sent in if there is a delay in the further testing required or if a decision is still to be made as to what is to happen with the failing product.
- (c) Data entry errors not being picked up by scrutinising the graph for each product. It is critical that the graph produced by the verification spreadsheet is examined to determine whether the product is “passing” or not. The graph must be scrutinised and then ideally, printed off, dated and initialled by your “Gate Keeper” before being filed.

Let me know if you have any questions and all the very best for the remainder of this year. Many thanks for your co-operation and assistance for the year to date and we look forward to working with you for the remainder of this year.

We are moving back onto the Scion site (Forest Research) early in the New Year which will be great but mobile phone numbers, email addresses and the PO Box number stay the same.

Yours sincerely, thank you and have a great Xmas and New Year

Paul Carpenter - Managing Director

on behalf of the Wood Wise and Grade Right Team: Vicki Wheeler, Keith Matheson, Ted Morris, Shane Bennett and myself.

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