

IMPORTANT!
ANY TRUSS PLANT MUST BE AWARE OF THIS

If you have been paying attention you should know that it will be a requirement for every truss plant to have a recognized quality control program. Beginning with the next Alberta Building Code due out this year there is a reference to TPIC 2019 which states in Section 8:

8.2 Quality control program

All fabricators shall have a recognized quality control program that complies with the requirements of CWTA, “National Quality Standard for Metal Plate Connected Wood Trusses.”

Then we expect the 2025 National Building Code will make reference to CSA S349:20 Certification requirements for manufacturers of metal-plate-connected trusses. This is a standard that is a very specific requirement on how a plants quality management system is audited by a Certifying Body approved by the Standards Council of Canada. I would suggest that every plant go to the CSA website and buy a copy of this standard for \$100.

[CSA S349:20 | Product | CSA Group](#)

If your plant is not able to be certified under this standard when the 2025 building code is in effect, you could have big problems.

And don’t think that you are going to be able to wait until some municipality calls for your certification, you are not going to be able to just phone up someone to come certify that you make good trusses. This standard is an examination of your quality management system, and you need to be able to prove that you have a system in place including a lot of documentation.

Some plants in Alberta that have been taking Q.C. serious over the past couple of years and have been following the WWTA requirements will probably not have much trouble in passing, but those that are lacking, and you know who you are, have some work in front of you to be certified. I would not be waiting until the time is running out to get your system in order.

Although the WWTA has our own standard for Q.C. the piece of the puzzle that is currently lacking to obtain the CSA certification is a Certifying Body approved by the Standards Council of Canada. The WWTA-Alberta and the Canadian Wood Truss Association of Canada are currently working on the creation of a recognized Certifying Body and I am taking the lead on this work, so it is going to be a priority for the next couple of years.

This is going to be a major change to the structure of the WWTA as we transition to a system where plants will have to be subject to a more stringent and independent auditing system.

Over the course of 2023 the WWTA will begin informing members of the requirements of CSA S349:20 to prepare them to be audited to this standard. This will include the development of a program building training program and the quality section of the monthly newsletter will focus on this standard starting with this one in January 2023.

CSA S349:20

This standard focuses on 5 elements of a quality management system:

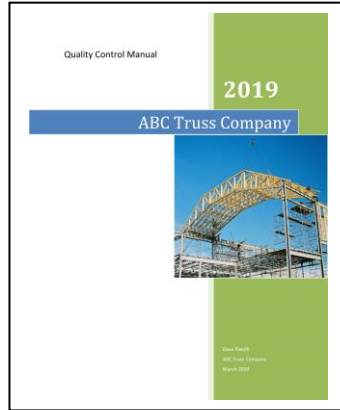
- 1) A Quality Control Manual,
- 2) Internal Inspections,
- 3) Truss Design Drawings,
- 4) Handling and Storage, and
- 5) External audited trusses.

The first 3 elements pretty much rely on the truss plant being able to present documentation to the auditor and the bar is set pretty high for what you have to show.

For instance, a Quality Control Manual is mandatory! This means that if you do not have a good one the audit does not continue, and it will be a fail. It does not matter if the trusses you produce are all perfect, if you do not have a Q.C. manual you will not be certified.

The good news is that the WWTA produced a template Q.C. manual in 2019 that is available to all members and is a good start. We will do an update in 2023 to ensure that it aligns with the CSA standard, but if you have already taken advantage of the use of this

template you are pretty much there. I will go into a little more detail on what is required in a Q.C. manual in the Q.C. portion of this newsletter.



When it comes to internal truss inspections for Element #2 the requirements may be a little less than what the WWTA has required in the past but may require more inspections than some are doing now, based on how their shop is set up. A history of these inspections must be able to be produced to pass an audit and at least 90% of the required inspections must be complete.

If you don't have at least 6 months of these inspections to show an auditor, you are not going to pass the audit.

The new requirement is for 3 inspections per set-up per week, and this included if you have a second shift the same requirements will apply for that shift. That means that if you are running 5 set-up locations, you are required to complete a total of 15 truss inspections for the week. I will talk more about this in the February newsletter.

This standard also has a review of truss design drawings in Element #3 to ensure that they are in compliant with TPIC requirements. Again, compliance is done through the review of documentation. The WWTA has touched on this under our current system, but we decided that this information would not contribute to the score, so this will be a bit of a difference. I will go over this in the March newsletter.

Element #4 is a review of the handling and storage of not only finished product, but the input product including lumber and plates. This is going to require a very high standard to pass the audit. If there are damaged products or trusses sitting on the ground observed by the auditor, you are not going to score very well on the audit. Look for more information in the April newsletter.

And finally, Element #5 is an inspection of at least 3 trusses by the auditor, so each truss makes up 1/3 of the points that can be awarded. These inspections only consider if the truss meets all the requirements of Appendix G of TPIC, not if they are close. So, for example, if 1 plate on one of the trusses is not within the placement tolerances no points can be awarded for that question and you would only receive 2/3 of the potential points if the other 2 trusses met the requirements. I will talk more about this in the May newsletter.



As mentioned previously the WWTA will be putting together a Program Building Course going into more detail that we are going to require that at least one person from every plant will be required to attend. The easiest way to pass a Q.C. audit is for the plant to have a trained person that knows exactly what the auditor is going to be looking at. This does not stop you from training in the meantime as most of the training can already be found on our online platform www.trustrainingonline.com. If you complete modules 105 to 109 you will have a good foundation for understanding the requirements.

In the past WWTA members have been encouraged to have their Q.C. system in compliance with the WWTA standard, but if you did not there really were not any consequences other than the odd occasion where some specifier would ask for it. This requirement is taking your compliance to a much higher level, and if you are not certified there could be huge consequences to your ability to conduct business.

I will also be auditing to this standard in 2023 in order to give plants a good understanding of how they will do under the CSA standard and make any required corrections to set them up for success when the standard comes into effect.

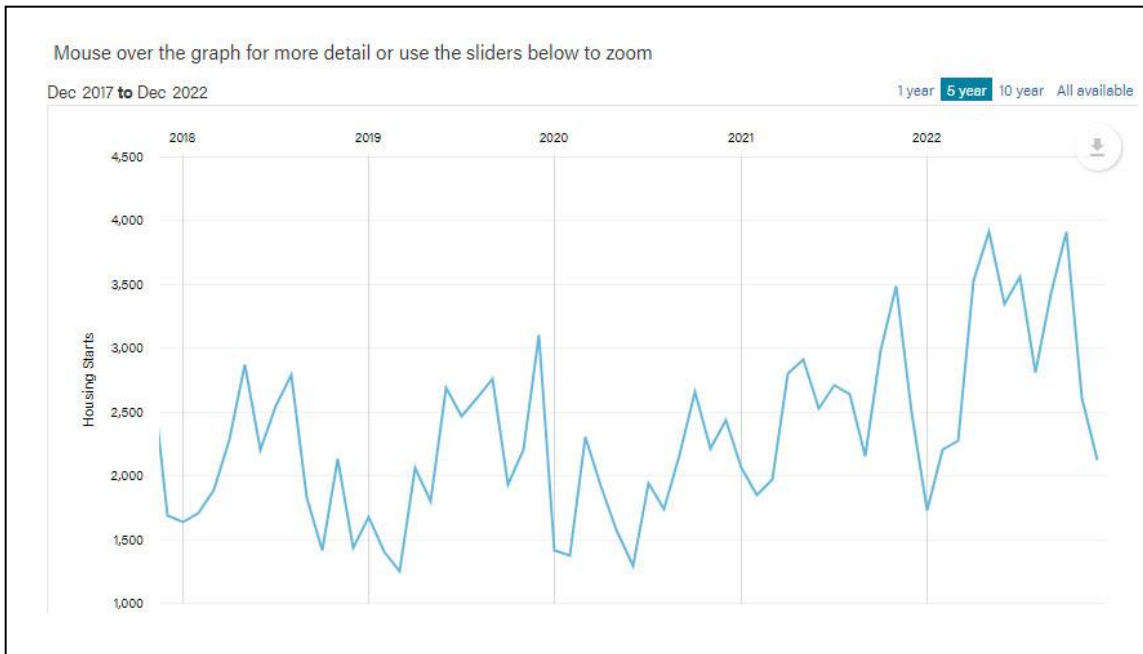
Once the Certifying Body is accredited by the SCC, which I expect to happen in 2024 there should be no excuse for plants not to achieve their certification by 2025. Of course, it would be impossible for every plant to achieve their certification at the exact same time, so the sooner you get on with it the better to avoid any business disruption.

If you have an idea for a commentary or would like to submit your own commentary for a future newsletter, please let me know at dave@wwta.ab.ca

Economic Update

In Alberta, urban housing starts totaled 2,119 in December 2022, a year-over-year decrease of 15.3%. Canadian housing starts increased by 3.1% over the same period. In Alberta, only row-units increased, with a year-over-year change of 44.6%. Apartment and other unit types had the largest decrease at -24.6%

Housing Starts Alberta December 2022						
	Dec-22	Dec-21	% Change	YTD 2022	YTD 2021	% Change
Alberta	2119	2502	-15.31%	35443	30612	15.78%
Edmonton	774	1060	-26.98%	14546	12546	15.94%
Calgary	1080	1155	-6.49%	17306	15017	15.24%
Red Deer	16	21	-23.81%	166	207	-19.81%
Grande Prairie	4	9	-55.56%	203	132	53.79%
Lethbridge	54	43	25.58%	816	639	27.70%
Wood Buffalo	10	1	900.00%	122	76	60.53%
Canada	18346	17797	3.08%	240312	244025	-1.52%



Housing starts in Alberta were down from 2612 units in November to close out the year at 35443 for 2022. The December starts were the lowest since January of this year. Despite the lower numbers for the last couple of months Alberta still exceeded 2021 levels by 15.8% hitting higher highs and higher lows over the last 5 years, which graph analysers will tell you is a good trend.

2022 was the highest level since 2015 and almost exactly in line with the most recent [ATB forecast](#). Total starts for the year were 33.7% above the pre-pandemic level set in 2019.

While there are several factors at play, the growing population of Alberta is a key driver of the growth in residential construction.

As of July 1, 2022, Alberta's population jumped 2.2% from the year prior and posted the fastest annual increase since 2014. This also beat Canada's population growth of 1.8% during the same timeframe.

Six provinces, led by Alberta and New Brunswick, posted annual increases in the number of starts last year. However, low numbers in Quebec were enough to push Canada's starts down by 3.4% relative to the record level set in 2021.

Looking ahead, ongoing interest rate hikes are likely to continue to slow new home construction across the country well into 2023.

Inflation still too high but trending down Rob Roach ATB January 17, 2023

The headline inflation rate in Canada in December was 6.3%, down from 6.8% in November.

The slower pace of price growth is largely attributable to lower gasoline prices which were, on average, 13.1% lower in December compared to November.

When food and energy products are excluded, "core" inflation slowed slightly, going from 5.4% in November to 5.3% in December.

At 6.0%, the inflation rate in Alberta in December was slightly lower than the national average.

The annual inflation rate in Canada last year came in at 6.8%.

You have to go back to 1982 when inflation was 10.9% to find a higher level of annual price growth in Canada.

Although inflation remains too high, December's price report is at least somewhat encouraging in that the trend is down rather than up.

A look back at Alberta's Labour Market in 2022 **Rob Roach January 16, 2023**

Glancing in the rear-view mirror is not the best way to know what's up ahead with regard to Alberta's labour market, but it's still helpful, especially when the windshield is foggy due to the ongoing effects of elevated inflation and high interest rates.

Fortunately, Alberta's labour market went into 2023 on a strong footing.

Strong job growth

- Average annual employment in Alberta in 2022 grew by 5.1% compared to 2021
- That's an average of 114,200 more jobs and the second highest percentage increase of any province (Prince Edward Island added 5,200 jobs for a percentage increase of 6.5%)
- About 100,000 (87%) of the increase in Alberta was in full-time work
- At 3.7%, employment growth in the country as a whole was solid, but more modest than in Alberta

The unemployment rate fell

- The unemployment rate in Alberta averaged 5.8% in 2022
- That's better than 2021 when it averaged 8.7% and much better than 2020 when it averaged 11.4%
- The annual unemployment rate hasn't been lower since 2014 when it averaged just 4.7%

Despite this, our unemployment rate was a bit higher than the national average

- The national unemployment rate averaged 5.3% last year compared to 5.8% in Alberta
- Quebec had the lowest annual unemployment rate at 4.3%; Newfoundland and Labrador had the highest at 10.8%
- The higher unemployment rate in Alberta was not due to a weaker economy—our relatively strong economy pulled a larger proportion of people into the provincial labour force and explains why our unemployment rate was higher even though we had stronger job growth
- Alberta's labour force grew by 1.8% compared to 1.3% nationally and we continued to have the highest participation rate of any province

What's next?

- Continued economic growth in the province combined with the labour market momentum built up last year will support job growth in Alberta in 2023
- With that said, we are expecting annual employment growth to slow to around 1.8% as interest rate increases work their way through the economy. At the same time, labour shortages will remain a key problem.

[Lumber- An Ugly 2022 But Spring Is on The Horizon \(barchart.com\)](http://barchart.com)

[6 Predictions for 2023 Global Forest Industry \(forest2market.com\)](http://forest2market.com)

Quality Control

CSA S349:20 Quality Control Manual

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter having a Q.C. manual under the CSA standard is MANDATORY. If you do not have one you will fail the audit and not be able to be certified under this standard. The standard also states that your manual must be approved by the Certifying Body. So, starting with the WWTa template manual is a good idea.

When we wrote the WWTa Alberta Q.C. Manual template in 2019 we did it according to our own standard so let’s see if it is compliant. CSA S349:20 states:

At a minimum, the plant quality assurance manual shall contain:

CSA S349:20 Requirement	Included in the WWTa template
a production flowchart or description of the manufacturing process	Yes 1.2
The manufacturer’s organizational chart, including a description of the duties and responsibilities assigned to key positions in the quality program	Yes 1.2.1, 1.3
Quality control procedures, including sampling criteria and how manufacturing processes are monitored to ensure that the product is consistently manufactured withing the permitted tolerances	Yes 1.5, Policy 2.1, Section 6
A document retention policy as approved by the certification body	Yes 2.5
Provisions for keeping the manual current, such as updates and revisions	No, although some of you have included this in your own manual
A clear delineation of what constitutes major and minor defects	Yes, 2.4, but could use some work
Corrective measures for major and minor defects	Yes, 2.4, but could use some work
A list of main production equipment	No, this is pretty indivial to the plant
A list of manufacturer’s specifications and	Yes, 7.1 Lumber picking.

quality control arrangements for raw materials and equipment	We should add something about plate storage and equipment
Measuring equipment: type, model, range, accuracy, frequency of calibration, and calibration agency	No
Methods for dealing with non-conforming product	Yes, 2.4

So, we have a couple of holes to fill in the template to meet the criteria, but they are pretty minor, you could certainly add the required material yourselves.

When it comes to the actual audit these are the 7 questions that pertain to the Q.C. manual. So go through them and see how you would do.

Element #1 Quality Control Manual				
<i>There are no point allocations for the quality control (QC) manual. This is a mandatory component for certification. If the QC manual is incomplete, the plant fails the audit and must address the missing components.</i>				
Questions		Score	Instructions	Notes
1.1	Does the QC manual contain a production flow chart and description of the manufacturing process?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must state where the documentation is located and when it was last updated.	
1.2	Does the QC manual contain an organizational chart and description of the duties and responsibilities assigned to key positions?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must state where the documentation is located and when it was last updated.	
1.3	Does the QC manual outline the internal truss inspection frequency and procedures?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must state where the policy is located and when it was last updated	
1.4	Does the QC manual document criteria of how manufacturing processes are monitored to ensure that the final product	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must state what the documented policies are and if the policies are in practice.	

	is manufactured within allowable tolerances?			
1.5	Does the QC manual have a process for document retention?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must explain how documents are retained including internal inspections and if the company processes are followed.	
1.6	Does the QC manual include a review of internal inspections by management?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor must describe the process of how the internal inspections are reviewed by management.	
1.7	Can the manufacturer demonstrate either through documentation, interview, or observation their procedure for removing and repressing plates?	N/A	Mandatory requirement. The auditor should either observe or review documentation on how the manufacturer repairs and/or represses plates. Example: If this situation does not arise during the audit period, the auditor may ask a worker how they repair or repress plates including their decision-making process of how to proceed. The auditor may also ask for a demonstration to evaluate their process.	
	Total Points Scored		As the Q.C. manual is mandatory no points are awarded. If the manual is not sufficient the audit will be failed.	
	Total Possible Points			
	Percentage			

The Q.C. manual is not a scored element as it is mandatory.

Next month I will touch on Element #2 Internal Inspections.

Health and Safety Toolbox

Reminder: OHS Code changes coming into effect March 31, 2023

As previously announced by the Government of Alberta, a number of upcoming changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Code (OHS Code) will be taking effect on March 31, 2023.

Several resources describing highlights of the upcoming OHS Code changes are available now in the Upcoming legislation changes section of Alberta’s OHS Resource Portal.

[OHS Publication. Upcoming legislation changes \(alberta.ca\)](https://www.alberta.ca/oHS-publication-upcoming-legislation-changes.aspx)

More resources will be added as they become available.

An amendment regulation was passed in December 2022 to enact the changes. This regulation, which contains details of the changes, can be viewed here.

[M.O. 2022-01 - Jobs, Economy and Northern Development \(alberta.ca\)](#).

To ensure the OHS Code is kept current, a three-year review plan is underway to help decide which parts of the OHS Code will be reviewed next.

If you have questions about the OHS Code review, contact lbr.ohsreview@gov.ab.ca.

Change Highlight: First Aid Part 11 in the OHS Code.

IMPORTANT This is an overview of updates effective March 31, 2023. Consult the law directly to make sure you comply with all applicable requirements.

KEY INFORMATION

- Part 11 identifies requirements for workplace first aid training, equipment, and supplies.
- Key changes include:
 - Harmonizing workplace first aid requirements in Canada.
 - Providing flexibility in implementation.
 - Clarifying requirements for work site parties, training agencies, service providers, and workplace first aiders.

For a detailed explanation of the changes go to:

[Change highlights - First Aid - Part 11 in the OHS Code.pdf](#)

Upcoming Employment Standards live webinars

Employment Standards webinars (including live Q&As) are scheduled for the following topics:

- Employment Standards in Alberta – Averaging Arrangements: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.
- Overview of Employment Standards in Alberta: Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.
- Employment Standards in Alberta – Wages and Overtime: Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.
- Employment Standards in Alberta – Administration and Enforcement: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

For more information, or to register for one of the sessions, please visit alberta.ca/employment-standards-webinars.aspx

News and Events

STANDATAs 19-BCI-028 Metal-plate-connected wood trusses and 19-BCI-029 Engineered Components.

The WWTA submitted proposals for both STANDATAs to Alberta Municipal Affairs January 5, 2023, to replace the previous one that was withdrawn in December, 2022. AMA is going to review and discuss at their upcoming Builders Subcouncil Meeting January 19. I expect that we will get some feedback shortly.

Depending on how the WWTA proposal is received will determine what we are going forward. I would like to thank those that helped in drafting our proposals during the last couple of weeks of December in order to make the cut-off delivery date. A special shout out to David Klassen, P.Eng from Star Building Materials for his time and expertise.

The WWTA would like to welcome a couple of new Preferred Suppliers to our membership.

Cameron Pickford
LUMBER/TRUSS SALES- CALGARY OFFICE



100-251 Midpark Blvd S.E.

Calgary Ab T2X 1S3

O: 587-747-7677

C: 403-901-5114

E: cameron.p@centurionlumber.com
www.centurionlumber.com

and

One by One Solutions Ltd.

Sascha Wittke

Owner / CEO

Cell Phone: 403 804 5898

Homepage: www.onebyonesolutions.ca

Email: sascha@onebyonesolutions.ca

Wage Survey

It is almost the time of year when the WWTA will be conducting our annual wage survey. **Only those that contribute will receive the results as usual.** Please consider contributing information so that you are able to make informed industry decisions for hiring. The survey will be going out the end of January and I need responses back by the end of February.

I think it will be especially important to contribute to the survey this year to see what effects inflation and worker availability have had on wages.

Environmental Product Declaration Survey

As I wrote about in the July 2022 WWTA newsletter these EPAs are going to be a requirement of bidding government work and most likely will be included in the 2025 National Building Code of Canada. We also had a presentation from Peter Moonan from the Canadian Wood Council in November that can be found on the WWTA webpage under the Conversation Series.

Peter sent out surveys to the managers of our members to gather information in order for The CWC to compile information that you can use in order to meet these requirements.

Unfortunately, the response on the surveys was not very good from anyone, so there is going to be another request coming your way. I know that it may seem like a pain in the bottom to do this when you have more urgent issues, and it does take a bit of fact finding within your company, but I can't see this not becoming a requirement in the near future.

I would encourage members to take the time to compile this information so that truss manufactures can benefit from the results. Otherwise, you might find yourself in the position of having to provide your own EPD, and I don't even know how you would go about doing that, but I am sure that it would be expensive.

Annual General Meeting of the WWTA

As we had such a good time with our first in-person meeting last May in Edmonton the Board of Directors has decided that we should stick with a May date. I am tentatively looking at May 11, so mark that day off. It is going to be in Southern Alberta somewhere. Once I get the location confirmed you will get more information.

WWTA Online Training

If you have not yet taken a look at the WWTA online training program I would encourage you to, as no doubt you will be hiring new workers in the near future, and it is a good method to get them productive earlier and safer. If you want an overview of the program, go to the WWTA website at: <http://www.wwta.ab.ca/truss-training-online.html>