

# **American Lumber Standard Committee, Incorporated®**

## **Visually Graded Lumber Grader Policy**

**November 5, 2021**

It has long been recognized by the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) that for the ALSC visual grading system to work effectively, a consistency in application of the ALSC-accredited agency grading rules by human and visual grading machines is necessary. Since the introduction of visual machine grading the importance of having an internal quality control process managed by qualified technicians or “trained graders” being present as a process control for machines has been recognized to maintain consistency of grading approaches. Trained graders are an important part of any mill’s Quality Control (QC) program. The mill QC process shall include grader training from the agency to insure on-grade performance between inspections made by the agency. For purposes of this policy a “trained grader” is someone employed by or contracted by an ALSC-accredited agency member’s mill who has sufficient training and capability to make accurate independent judgments regarding visually grade stamped lumber currently being produced by the mill.

It is the policy of ALSC that subscribing mills of an ALSC-accredited agency shall have a minimum of one trained grader, who has been trained to grade the product(s) currently being produced, present at the subscribing mill in a position to observe the lumber being produced a minimum of one time per shift when the mill is producing ALSC grade-stamped lumber, whether such lumber is graded by automated visual grader or not.

**Background for Policy:**

At the July 23, 2021, American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) Enforcement Subcommittee meeting a discussion of the appropriateness of requiring certified graders at mills with automated grading machines took place. It was the consensus of the group that ALSC should develop a visually graded lumber grader policy statement that provided clarification of the ALSC stance on the necessity of having trained visually lumber graders on site to provide process control oversight of grading operations regardless for whether a visual machine grader was present or not. It was felt that the ALSC visual grading system is based on process control and at a minimum ALSC should have a statement similar to that of the Canadian Lumber Standard Accreditation Board (CLSAB) in place as a requirement for ALSC mills. A task group was formed to develop a brief visually graded lumber grader ALSC policy statement. The task group met on September 23, 2021, and the policy language was refined by the task group and unanimously adopted. The resulting policy was sent out for letter ballot to the ALSC Enforcement Subcommittee for letter ballot on September 24, 2021. The policy was approved by the Enforcement Subcommittee by an 8/1/0 vote. It is the expectation of ALSC that member mills will be informed by their applicable agency of this requirement and that when this policy is finally approved, it shall be part of the overall set of rules and policies that a member mill agrees to abide by when signing on to an ALSC-accredited agency. The ALSC passed the policy on November 5, 2021 by a 10/2/4 vote.