Area Engineer

Location: Cowie

Job Type: Permanent

West Fraser is a diversified wood products company with more than 60 facilities in Canada, the United States and Europe. From responsibly sourced and sustainably managed forest resources, the company produces lumber, engineered wood (OSB, LVL, MDF, plywood, particleboard), and other products including pulp, newsprint, wood chips and renewable energy.

Our UK-manufactured products are used extensively in the construction, DIY and furniture sectors. Our brands, SterlingOSB Zero, CaberFloor and CaberMDF, are well known in the construction industry and are commonly specified by architects, national housebuilders and specifiers.
We are proud that as a certified net carbon negative company we lock up more carbon in our products than we emit making them, helping the UK construction sector comply with net zero targets and beyond.

About the Role
Are you a driven engineer with a passion for improving reliability, performance, and operational excellence? At West Fraser, we are looking for an **Area Engineer** to take ownership of a key production area and help drive world-class equipment performance across one of the UK's leading wood panel manufacturing operations.

This is a fantastic opportunity to combine your technical expertise, analytical skills, and continuous improvement mindset to deliver tangible results in a fast-paced industrial environment.

Key Responsibilities:

1) Reliability Improvement & Equipment Performance
- Act as the technical owner for the assigned production area (e.g., dryers, press line, forming, finishing, utilities), ensuring equipment delivers required **uptime, throughput rate, and quality performance**.
- Lead **root cause investigations** for repeat or high-impact failures—using methodologies such as RCA, 5-Why, Fishbone, and FMEA—driving corrective actions and engineering solutions.
- Monitor and analyse **equipment KPIs** (MTBF, MTTR, downtime hours, throughput loss, energy consumption, quality rejects) and translate trends into reliability improvement plans.
- Oversee reliability improvements such as redesigns, material upgrades, lubrication improvements, precision maintenance upgrades, guarding enhancements, and component standardisation.
- Support deployment of **condition monitoring** (vibration analysis, thermography, ultrasound, oil analysis) and incorporate findings into reliability strategies.

2) Maintenance Strategy, PPM Optimisation & Downtime Reduction
- Review and optimise **preventive and predictive maintenance routines**, ensuring tasks are value-added and based on criticality or failure modes.
- Reduce maintenance-driven downtime by improving planned work quality, scope, documentation, and sequencing with production.
- Work with maintenance execution teams to ensure precision maintenance standards are consistently applied.
- Identify criticality of work and drive prioritisation through weekly and shutdown planning
- Identify opportunities to convert reactive work into planned work and track improvements through the CMMS.
- Support the scheduling and technical planning of **shutdowns, overhauls, and major interventions**, ensuring all engineering standards and specifications are met.

3) Throughput Optimisation & Loss Elimination
- Analyse throughput losses (speed losses, micro-stops, quality holds) and work with Operations and Process to implement solutions that increase OEE.
- Conduct constraint analysis on primary bottlenecks (e.g., chipper, dryer line, press, saws, sanding, conveyors) and develop engineering interventions to raise sustainable throughput.
- Collaborate with Production on **operating windows**, alarms, start-up/shutdown procedures, and cleaning routines to minimise reliability risk and maximise run rates.
- Drive cross-functional continuous improvement events that target uptime, rate improvements, or reduction of failure recurrence.

4) Technical Engineering Support & Standards
- Provide engineering expertise for both maintenance and production teams, answering technical questions related to machinery, controls, sensors, drives, and mechanical/electrical systems.
- Ensure engineering modifications follow the **Management of Change (MOC)** process with updated drawings, documentation, spare parts, and risk assessments.

- Liaise with OEMs and other suppliers to highlight and discuss equipment reliability & failure modes which drive engineering based solutions and equipment upgrades.
- Maintain or update engineering documentation: P&IDs, electrical schematics, lubrication maps, asset lists, and critical spares catalogues.
- Champion compliance with relevant regulations (PUWER, ATEX, LOLER, DSEAR, EAWR) and site engineering standards.

5) Cross-Functional Collaboration

- Work closely with Production leads to prioritise engineering tasks based on real-time performance risks and throughput constraints.
- Collaborate with Maintenance Supervisors, Planners, and Technicians to ensure engineering solutions are practical, safe, and maintainable.
- Provide engineering support and oversight for contractor activities within the area, ensuring technical quality and safe execution.

6) Skills Development & Continuous Improvement

- Identify competency gaps within maintenance and operations teams related to engineered systems, and develop training plans or coaching sessions.
- Support technicians in developing troubleshooting capability, precision maintenance skills, and understanding of failure modes.
- Promote a culture of **problem-solving, ownership, and continuous improvement**, encouraging teams to challenge equipment performance norms and reliability risks.

What We Are Looking For:

Essential

- Degree in Mechanical or Manufacturing Engineering.
- Experience in a **heavy industrial or continuous process environment** (wood panel, pulp/paper, sawmill, metals, chemicals, FMCG).
- Strong knowledge of reliability engineering practices, failure modes, and equipment lifecycle management.
- Ability to interpret mechanical and electrical drawings, OEM manuals, and engineering specifications.
- Experience with CMMS systems (Maximo preferred) and use of data for decision-making.

Desirable

- Formal training in reliability tools (RCA, FMEA, Condition Monitoring, RCM).
- Experience with continuous press technology, large dryers, industrial dust handling, drive systems, and automation.
- Experience facilitating improvement workshops (Lean, Six Sigma, Kaizen).
- Project management experience.

If this position sounds like the career for you, get in touch with Nicola Howe via email at Nicola.howe@Westfraser.com.