

Control of Tree Felling Charter Standard Statement for Felling Licensing

Introduction

The Forestry Commission is the Government department that carries out the Government's forestry policy in Scotland, England and Wales and, under the provisions of the Forestry Act 1967, is responsible for the control of tree felling. The purpose of such control is to safeguard the environment and amenity of the countryside, whilst ensuring that woodlands and forests are maintained as a renewable resource.

The Forestry Commission controls tree felling through the issue of felling licences. We also investigate cases of suspected illegal tree felling and, when appropriate, prosecute offenders. Any owner or tenant convicted of an illegal felling can be served with a restocking notice to ensure that the trees are replaced.

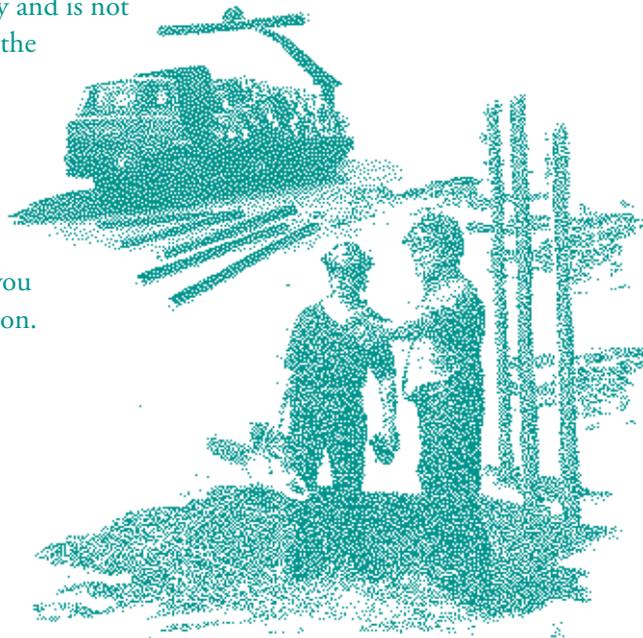
We are committed to carry out our duty in an efficient way by keeping the costs of complying with statutory requirements to a minimum, whilst ensuring that the public benefits embodied in the Forestry Standard (such as amenity, recreation, landscape and conservation) are safeguarded.

Information and Advice

To help you decide whether you need a felling licence we have produced a booklet '**Tree Felling - getting permission**'. You can get a copy of this booklet from any Forestry Commission office. Their addresses are listed on the back of this booklet.

The booklet tells you how to get permission for the felling of trees, but it should be noted that this is for guidance only and is not a legally binding interpretation of the legislation.

You can get advice about felling licences from your local Forestry Commission office. We can also give you initial advice about good forestry practice that you should apply to any felling operation.



Openness

We will...

- always carry identification and give our names in all correspondence with you, on the telephone and in face to face contact;
 - keep you informed about the progress of your application and discuss any proposed restocking conditions with you;
 - after felling, arrange to inspect the land to ensure that any restocking required by a conditional licence has taken place;
 - advise you in writing if your licence conditions have not been met;
 - allow you time to put things right.
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- If you do not put things right, we may issue you with a formal Enforcement Notice. This will give you a further short time to carry out the work. You may be prosecuted if you do not comply with this Notice. We may then carry out the work and charge you for it.
 - If we have to investigate an alleged illegal felling where trees may have been felled without a licence or in excess of the amount approved under a licence, we will try to inform the landowner or lessee (where known) that we intend to enter on the land to inspect the felling, carry out measurements and establish the facts.
 - We will report the facts to the landowner or any other person involved in the felling and we will indicate any further action that the Forestry Commission intends to take.

Response

- We will answer telephone enquiries promptly.
- If you speak to someone who cannot provide advice or you need technical advice we will arrange for someone who can help to call you back and if necessary arrange a visit.
- If you write to us and your letter needs a reply, we will respond **within 2 weeks**. If we are unable to give you a full reply within this time we will tell you when we will reply and why we cannot reply in two weeks.



Your Felling Application

- We will let you know that we have received your felling licence application within **3 working days**.
- If we cannot deal with your application we will tell you why.
- If your application is complete and we can deal with it, we will:
 - arrange to contact you within **3 weeks** if we need to visit the site;
 - carry out any necessary visit within **6 weeks**;
 - not begin consultation or place details on the Public Register of New Planting and Felling until we have inspected the site (if necessary) or discussed any necessary changes with you;
 - try to conclude any consultation required with other statutory bodies within 4 weeks. (Details of your application, excluding thinning, will appear on the public register for 4 weeks);
 - aim to issue your licence within **10 weeks** of getting your application, unless there are circumstances outwith our control or the application raises sensitive or complex issues;
 - tell you if and why we are not going to be able to meet any of the deadlines.

We are required by the Forestry Act 1967 to reach a decision about your application within 3 months of the date we receive a satisfactory application, unless you agree to an extension of time.

Listening to you

- Please tell us what you think of the service that we provide. This can be in writing, by telephone, fax or e-mail. This will help us provide the service you need.
- Alternatively, tell our staff when they visit your woodland or at any other meeting with them.
- We regularly liaise with organisations which represent forest and land owners, nurseries, forestry agents, contractors, local authorities, statutory and voluntary environmental and amenity interests and take account of their views.

How you can help us

- Ask for leaflets, information and guidance if you are unsure of what to do.
- Complete your application forms legibly.
- Provide a good quality map (normally 1:10,000 or 1:2500), we need two signed copies.
- Set out your proposals and give us all the information you think we need to assess your application.
- Ensure your application meets environmental and other guidelines (e.g. the Forestry Standard).
- Tell us if you are concerned that trees may be being felled without a licence.

Improving Service



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Complaints

- If you have a complaint about us or our service, tell us in writing, by telephone, fax, e-mail or in person.
- You should first contact your local Conservator, at the appropriate office.
- The Conservator will answer your complaint within 10 working days, or let you know what is being done about it.
- If you are dissatisfied with the response, you can contact the Chief Conservator at the National Office.
- If you are still not satisfied after the Chief Conservator has replied and consider that your complaint has not received the proper treatment or consideration you may ask for it to be considered by the appropriate non-executive Forestry Commissioner.

You can write to:

**The Secretary to the Commissioners, Forestry Commission,
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT**

He will investigate all the circumstances and let you and us know the outcome.

The Forestry Commission sets standards for the forestry industry. It is committed to providing the best service possible with the resources available.

