

1 Purpose

This Guidance Note explains how to complete the application forms required in order to apply for a licence to fell growing trees under the Forestry Act 1967 (as amended).

You should read the Forestry Commission's booklet "[Tree Felling - Getting Permission](#)", before making an application for a licence. This booklet sets out what we will consider when processing your application and lists key legislation relating to tree felling.

We encourage use of Woodland Management Plans. These plans outline the objectives for the woodland and set out management proposals – including felling and replanting – to achieve them usually over 10 to 20 years. Such plans help to demonstrate sustainable forest management and compliance with the UKFS and as a result we can provide longer-term felling permission (up to 10 years) where your plan is approved by us in place. From 2015 a woodland management plan will be required in order to obtain grant aid for woodland options. For more information please see the [Creating a Woodland Management Plan webpage](#).

2 Processing your application

We process applications as quickly as possible but to allow time for our woodland officer to look at the site and carry out any necessary consultations, we recommend that you send your application **at least three months** before you want to start the felling.

Unless your application is only for thinning (with no other felling work), we will put information about it on our public register. Details stay on the public register for four weeks so that interested parties and members of the public have an opportunity to comment on the proposal. We cannot issue a licence until that time has passed.

Do not start any tree felling until you have a licence. Any felling carried out without a felling licence may be an offence unless it is covered by one of the exemptions named in the Forestry Act, e.g., the trees are within a garden.

Any licence granted as a result of your application will apply only to the trees and the type of felling described in your approved felling licence.

3 Safeguarding Protected Species

All wild birds¹, their nests and eggs are protected by law (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and it is therefore an offence to intentionally harm or kill a wild bird or to destroy their nests or dwellings. Certain wild birds (listed in the Act's [Schedule 1](#)) are also protected from intentional or reckless disturbance while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturbance involving the dependent young of such a bird.

You should assess the risks your tree or woodland work poses to wildlife to ensure wild birds are not intentionally harmed or killed and that their nests or dwellings are not damaged or destroyed. For most operations you should therefore avoid work during the bird nesting season.

Several species of animal that are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 are found in woodland, including: otter, great crested newt, common dormice, all species of bats, sand lizard and smooth snake and red squirrels. To safeguard these European Protected Species (EPS) Forestry Commission and Natural England have produced a set of good practice guidelines. These are available from our website: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies>

Where good practice cannot be complied with, an EPS licence for the work will be required. If you are applying for a felling licence you should complete the [EPS checklist](#) before starting any tree felling operation to identify whether EPS may be present and the steps that should be taken to safeguard them. The Forestry Commission may request a copy of this checklist. This is to satisfy us that you have considered the effect your work might have and what mitigation measures you have put in place, before we are able to approve a felling licence.

Natural England is responsible for many of the regulations that protect the natural environment, including the management and licensing of works affecting wildlife. More information on their regulatory work can be found on their [web site](#).

To help those undertaking tree felling manage their operations within the law the Forestry Commission have developed an Operational Site Assessment. This form is **not** a legal requirement or something the FC monitor, it is simply a tool you may choose to use. It is available at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies>.

You should pay particular attention to the presence of veteran trees because these are likely to host protected as well as other rare species. A veteran tree is an individual that is significantly older and often of larger girth than normal, and has aesthetic, cultural, historic and biological interest because of its age and size. It is essential to be aware of the presence and location of veterans as they are often vulnerable to mismanagement, and great care should be taken in the planning and execution of any operations in their vicinity.

¹ Game birds not considered wild birds under the Act but are subject to various Game Acts, which protect them during the close season.

4 Felling Trees in Special Areas

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

If the trees are being felled within a SSSI you must obtain Natural England's consent for the work in addition to your felling licence. This requirement is over and above any consultation we may undertake with Natural England on your application for a licence.

Where possible we will obtain Natural England's consent for you when we process your application for a felling licence. In such cases we will send your consent from Natural England at the same time as the felling licence. Note that Natural England's consent may list additional conditions.

To enable us to do this you must complete a [Supplementary Notice of Operations within a SSSI](#) and send this to us with your licence application. **If you do not provide this form you must obtain consent from Natural England independently.** To help us and Natural England process your application as quickly as possible, we may arrange a joint pre-application or application site visit with your Natural England advisor.

Formal consent is not required for work adjacent to a SSSI but Natural England may wish to advise the land manager of precautions to consider so that their work does not cause damage to the features of interest.

Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

If the trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or they are within a Conservation Area (under the Town and Country Planning Acts), we will decide whether to grant the felling licence after consulting with the Local Planning Authority. You must give details of any TPOs or Conservation Area in Part 4 of your application form.

Before you submit your application, you must ask your local planning authority if there is a Tree Preservation Order on the trees or if they are in a Conservation Area. **A felling licence will not cover the felling of trees to which a TPO applies or which are in a Conservation Area if you have not declared their existence in the application.**

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

You will require consent from English Heritage if you are proposing any work which may affect a Scheduled Ancient Monument. You must contact English Heritage to agree this consent and any conditions which may be applied to it.

5 Completing your application form

You need to complete the [application form](#) and provide us with one copy of a map(s) showing the area to be felled. The application form must be signed and dated and include with it a map showing the area covered by the application. The map must also be signed and dated.

5.1 Application Map

In line with DEFRA and other Government departments we have adopted Ordnance Survey MasterMap® (OSMM) as the preferred standard of mapping for applications. MasterMap® is the most up-to-date large-scale digital map of Great Britain.

Applicants can get free copies of an OSMM map by completing the Map Request Form available from our [website](#). Applicants should allow two weeks for the delivery of the OSMM maps they have requested. **If you would like to submit your application using mapping data other than OSMM you should contact your local office to ensure we will be able to accept your maps.**

In certain instances we will accept the submission of digital mapping data. You should contact your local office to discuss proposals to use digital data to ensure the data submitted will be in an acceptable format and standard.

If you do not use our Map Request Service you must provide us with an original map or a good quality photocopy. **We will return applications that include maps that are not acceptable without registering them.**

Before you mark the map, check that:

- It is an up-to-date Ordnance Survey map.
- It is at a scale of either 1:10,000, 1:5,000 or 1:2,500 (more than one map may be required for large areas).
- The scale is shown on the map.
- Any relevant details are not hidden by folds or other marks or labels.

Marking the map - You must mark clearly the location of the trees to be felled or thinned. You must also mark the grid reference of the centre of the felling area. This must lie within the woodland or the area of trees to be felled. If the point of access to the area is not obvious, show this on the map also. You should not use a map used for a previous application (unless proposals remain exactly the same).

Part 1 – Applicant's details

We can issue a licence to fell trees to either:

- the owner of the land on which the trees are growing, or;
- a tenant whose lease entitles them to fell the trees.

An agent may complete the form but must give the name of the owner or tenant as the applicant, because we can only issue the licence in their name. If you are an agent acting on the applicant's behalf you will need to provide an [Agent Authority form](#) which confirms your authority to represent the applicant before we can administer the application. If you have an SBI it may help us process your application if you provide this – for example we store agent authority forms by SBI.

Part 2 - Trees to be felled

Name of Property – State the name of the estate or woodland. Where possible this should correspond to the name of the property on your Land Registry title deed.

Name of Wood – Provide the name the woodland is known under.

Grid Reference – Two letters and six figures are required. Most Ordnance Survey maps explain how to do this.

Nearest Town or Locality name: Either state the name of the nearest town or settlement or a location identified on the Ordnance Survey Map.

Local authority – Specify the local planning authority for the application area.

Designations – State whether the application area is subject to any designations, for example, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Part 2b – Felling Operations

Felling Site/Cpt - Enter the number of each compartment (Cpt) or the name of the wood or field. You can use a separate line for each compartment, or group of compartments that share the same Type of Operation and species mix. The numbers should correspond to your application map. Please use NA if not applicable.

Type of Operation – Use the table in Appendix 1 to identify the correct felling operation.

Species – All species that account for more than 20% of the timber that will be felled must be listed in this column. A main species is any species that accounts for more than 20% of the trees to be felled. This is to ensure compliance with the EU Timber Regulation Appendix 2 provides codes for the main tree species.

Marking of trees - The trees to be felled must be clearly marked before you submit your application. Give details of how you have marked the trees, e.g., yellow paint. Avoid the permanent marking (e.g., by blaze) of trees of high conservation or amenity value. For clear felling, line thinning, or coppice, you need only mark the boundary trees as long as you mark the area of felling clearly on the map. We may be prepared to accept a sample marking except in complex or sensitive cases when full marking will be required.

Estimated area - The estimated area of the tree felling in hectares.

Estimated volume – The volume of timber that will be felled, in cubic metres. If you are uncertain of the tree volume you can find indicative volumes here: [Timber Volume Calculator](#).

Further information about proposed felling - Tell us any extra information which will help assess your proposals such as:

- The reason for the work.
- Thinning intensity (percentage of trees or basal area) and type (line, crown etc.).
- If any particular type or species of trees are to be felled or retained and why.
- How you plan to avoid damage to sensitive areas such as water courses or archaeological sites.
- How you intend to protect or mitigate for any protected species if present.
- Timings for the work.

PART 3 – Proposed restocking

You must explain how you intend to restock the felled areas by completing the Restocking Proposals Table. If you do not intend to restock the felled area or provide compensatory tree planting you should complete an [“Application to Convert Woodland to Open Habitat”](#) and send this with your [felling licence application](#). We expect such applications to comply with the [Government’s Policy on when to convert woods and forests to open habitats in England](#). Completing this part of the form does not constitute an application for any [grant aid](#) that may be available for restocking.

Restocking Proposals table

Felling Site/Cpt - Enter the number of each compartment (Cpt) or the name of the wood or field. Use a separate line for each compartment. Use NA if not applicable.

Restocking Proposals – Use the codes on the application form to denote the method of restocking.

Species – Name the species you will be restocking with. Appendix 2 provides codes you may use for the main tree species. For information and ideas about species to consider planting please see our [Spreading the risk: species and genetic diversity webpage](#) and the [Ancient and Native Woodland Practice Guide](#).

Area (ha) – The total area of the compartment that will be restocked in hectares.

% of total restock area – State the % of the restocking area that will be restocked with this prescription.

Density (stems per hectare) – State the number of trees that will be restocked per hectare.

Further information on your restocking proposals – Please provide any further information such as whether you intend to use planting, coppice regrowth or natural regeneration. You also need to include maintenance and protection measures, both silvicultural and environmental.

PART 4 – Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

If the trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or they are within a Conservation Area (under the Town and Country Planning Acts) provide details here.

PART 5 – Declarations

We may ask you to produce evidence that any necessary consents have been obtained and that you have sufficient interest in the land to make the application. An agent may only sign this form if they have the consent of the owner. We will only accept a fully completed Agent Authority form as evidence of this consent. Tenants and lessees may need the consent of the landowner. Work which may affect a scheduled site of conservation or archaeological value will normally require the consent of the relevant statutory body.

6 Getting help

Forestry Commission will offer advice and help you come to decisions about your options and opportunities for woodland management and tree felling but cannot help you draw up your application.

Our website contains all of the information regarding woodland regulations: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/ewgs>. If you do not have access to the internet, you can request this information from your local Forestry Commission office.

Our [Land Information Search](#) will tell you about special designations, features and other grant schemes that are displayed in map form

The information in this document is for guidance only and is not a legally binding interpretation of the legislation. Copies of the Forestry Act 1967 (as amended) and the Regulations affecting tree felling can be obtained from booksellers or from the Government's legislation website: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi>

Appendix 1: Felling Operations

Code	Operation	Description
FC	Fell coppice	An area of woodland in which the trees or shrubs are periodically cut back to ground level to stimulate growth and provide wood products. Notes: A licence for clear felling will typically carry conditions to restock. Cutting maiden (single) stems to create coppice will be considered under Clear or Regeneration felling as appropriate. Cutting the main stem at any height will be considered coppicing rather than <i>pollarding</i> which involves cutting back the top branches to the trunk.
CF	Clear felling	Cutting down of an area of woodland (if it is within a larger area of woodland it is typically a felling greater than 0.25 ha). Sometimes a scatter or small clumps of trees may be left standing within the felled area. Note: A licence for clear felling will typically carry conditions to restock.
T	Thinning	The removal of a proportion of trees in a forest after canopy closure, usually to promote growth and greater value in the remaining trees (by adjusting density or species composition). Note: Thinning will normally involve the removal of no more than 30% (or less) of the standing volume from across the compartment/woodland, once every ten years for broadleaves and up to once every five years for conifers. Felling more than this proportion of the standing volume at more than this frequency or felling this proportion in a concentrated area could constitute regeneration felling (see below) and may require restocking.
RF	Regeneration felling	Tree felling to remove mature trees and create environments that favour the establishment or release of regeneration. Regeneration felling can be used to promote and secure restocking in different silvicultural systems such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform shelterwood - opening the canopy evenly and gradually to develop regeneration and achieve a new stand. • Group shelterwood – opening the canopy in groups and then expanding them to develop regeneration and achieve a new stand. • Irregular shelterwood - opening the canopy irregularly to develop regeneration over a relatively long period of time and achieve a new stand. • Selection system – where felling and regeneration are continuous over the whole area; group selection involves felling groups of trees (generally <0.25 ha) and single tree selection involves felling single trees. <p>Regeneration fellings should release existing advanced regeneration, create conditions for new regeneration or to ensure the survival of under-planted trees, or all of these. A licence for regeneration felling will usually be conditional on protecting the existing regeneration and ensuring its continued development.</p>
FO	Felling other	Felling hedgerow trees and single isolated trees.
OS	Open Space	Felling within the woodland to create areas of woodland open space, such as rides or glades (rather than deforestation).

Appendix 2: Codes for the common tree species

For information and ideas about species to consider planting please see our web page:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8M7EJ6>.

Broadleaf species					
Species	Code	Species	Code	Species	Code
Alder	AR	Wild cherry	WCH	Sessile oak	SOK
Common alder	CAR	Elm	EM	Red oak	ROK
Grey alder	GAR	Hazel	HAZ	Poplar	PO
Ash	AH	Hornbeam	HBM	Rowan	ROW
Aspen	ASP	Lime	LI	Sweet chestnut	SC
Beech	BE	Small-leaved lime	SLI	Sycamore	SY
Birch	BI	Field maple	FM	Willow	WL
Downy birch	PBI	Norway maple	NOM	Goat willow	GWL
Silver birch	SBI	Pedunculate oak	POK	Cricket bat willow	CBW
Holly	HL	Oak (English)	OK		

Conifer species					
Species	Code	Species	Code	Species	Code
Western red Cedar	RC	European larch	EL	Scots pine	SP
Lawson cypress	LC	Hybrid larch	HL	Norway spruce	NS
Douglas fir	DF	Japanese larch	JL	Sitka spruce	SS
Grand fir	GF	Corsican pine	CP	Western hemlock	WH
Noble fir	NF	Lodgepole pine	LP	Yew	YEW
Serbian spruce	OMS	Oriental spruce	OS	Pacific silver fir	PSF
European silver fir	ESF	Nordmann fir	NOF	Maritime pine	MAP
Macedonian pine	MCP	Leyland cypress	LEC	Atlantic cedar	AC
Japanese incense cedar	JCR	Coast redwood	RSQ	Wellingtonia	WSQ

Other elements		
Species	Code	Description
Woody shrubs	WSH	Native woody shrubs and minor trees appropriate to the site i.e. hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, dogwood, alder, spindle, guilder-rose, wild privet, elder
Open ground	OG	Managed open space. It's purpose and how it will be managed must be clearly described

Appendix 3: Restocking Codes

Code	Description
RP	Replant - The felled area will be replanted.
NR	Natural Regeneration - The felled area will be restocked with natural regeneration of trees.
AA	Plant an Alternative Area – The felled area will not be restocked but an alternative area will be replanted.
CR	Coppice regrowth - Restocking by the re-growth from the stumps of the felled trees.
IT	Individual Trees – Restocking will be achieved by replanting individual trees. This option is only appropriate when restocking individual trees that are not part of a woodland.
OG	Designed Open Ground – The area will not be restocked but used to create managed open space within the woodland.
DIR	Do not Intend to Restock – The area will not be restocked in order to restore open habitat in accordance with the Government's Policy on when to convert woods and forests to open habitats in England . You should complete an Application to Convert Woodland to Open .
AAIT	Plant an Alternative Area with Individual Trees - Restocking will be achieved by replanting individual trees at an alternative location to the felling. This option is only appropriate when restocking individual trees that are not part of a woodland and we are satisfied there will be no detrimental impact associated with relocating the trees.