



FOREST SERVICE

timber customer charter



FSC

SGS-FM/COC-0455

Mission Statement

The Forest Service exists to maintain, protect and expand forests in a sustainable way and thereby increase the natural resources of Northern Ireland. We produce timber for industrial use, we encourage the use of forests by people, and we improve the environmental quality of life.

The values we hold as an organisation are important in ensuring that at all times we aim for the highest standards of professionalism, both in our operational work and our service to customers.

Sales Procedures

One of the strategic aims of the Forest Service is to secure the best value for publicly owned timber, in tandem with encouraging the development of a healthy and competitive harvesting and wood processing industry.

We use a variety of sales methods to achieve this:

- Term Contracts - Sales of agreed quantities of timber over a fixed time period, taking into account the specific needs of individual customers.
- Tender Sale - Sales of varying size and type offered through a formal tender system.
- Negotiated Sales - Sales of timber likely to be of interest to specialised or localised markets. It also comprises limited sales to existing Customers who make a strong case for purchasing Northern Ireland timber to retain current markets or maintain employment.

We will make copies of our sales procedures available to Customers on request. No significant changes will be made to these procedures without consulting our Customers through the UK Forest Products Association (UKFPA).



Production Forecasting

We realise that long-term strategies are required by everyone involved in the forest and timber industries. To enable our Customers to plan for the future we will publish: -

- Annually, in our Corporate and Business Plan, the volume of timber we expect to sell during each of the next five years.
- At 5 yearly intervals, a 10 year forecast of the anticipated timber production capability of Forest Service woodlands. This volume will be broken down by top diameter class.

Sales Information

To inform and update our Customers on a regular basis we will publish: -

- Annually, a key target stating the minimum volume to be offered for sale.
- A timetable of formal tender sales.
- Annually, a table showing the average prices obtained for roadside and standing timber by the Forest Service over the previous 12 months compared with the year before.

Consultation

The Forest Service strives to improve the quality of Customer care by regular consultation with stakeholders and welcome suggestions to enhance our service. To improve communications and co-operation we undertake to: -

- Formally meet representatives of the UKFPA on an annual basis, or more frequently if required.
- Meet individual Customers on request.
- Actively participate with the timber industry to secure efficiency gains throughout the wood products supply chain.



Contractual Arrangements

We endeavour to deal with all our Customers in a professional and business-like manner. Conscious of this commitment we undertake to: -

- Provide individual Contracts for Customers to cover all sales of timber.
- Use Standard Conditions of Sale relevant to all Contracts and apply these equally and impartially to all Customers.
- Inform Customers of any exceptional clauses outside of our Standard Conditions.
- Designate a Harvesting Manager for each sale lot of timber who will be the first line of contact between our Customer and the Forest Service.
- Provide details, on request, of the procedures governing the granting of credit facilities to cover timber sales.
- Consult with UKFPA before making significant changes to procedures.

Staff Awareness

We recognise the important role of Forest Service staff in providing high quality standards of service. We shall ensure that all staff involved with the sale or harvesting of timber have: -

- An awareness and are regularly updated as to the general state of the timber market.
- Knowledge regarding the particular requirements of individual Customers.
- Received appropriate training for the work they are involved in.
- An understanding of and respect for Commercial Confidences.



Certification

Woods managed by the Forest Service have been certified under the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. This gives independent verification that our forests are well managed and permits use of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label for wood products manufactured from our timber, with appropriate chain of custody certification.

- Sustainable management will be a strategic goal underpinning all of our business planning processes.
- With the co-operation of our Customers, we will strive to maintain the high standards of management essential to retain this certification.

Complaints Procedure

We are committed to looking at all complaints in a positive way and to dealing with them as quickly as possible. The following procedure should be used to register complaints: -

- Please speak first to the Manager directly associated with your concern. By doing this it may be possible to deal with the problem quickly and informally.
- If you are not satisfied, please contact our Customer Services Manager (at Forest Service, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB; Telephone 02890 524480) who will arrange for your complaint to be formally investigated. You will receive a reply within 15 working days.
- If you are not satisfied with our reply, you can write to the Chief Executive at Dundonald House. The Chief Executive will investigate your complaint and will write to you within 15 working days.
- If you are still not satisfied, your local MP or MLA can refer the matter to the Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland who will investigate your case and decide whether we have acted correctly. The Ombudsman will normally have expected you to have used our complaints procedure before you contact him.

Further Information

We expect to review this Charter every three years and revise it as necessary. If you would like to ask about any of the Standards referred to in this Charter or make any comments, including suggestions on new Charter Standards, please contact the Marketing Officer at either the address or telephone number below: -

Marketing Officer, Forest Service,
Dundonald House,
Upper Newtownards Road,
Belfast, BT4 3SB.

Telephone Number – 028 90 524 274

The Customer Charter is also available on the Forest Service website at
www.forestserviceni.gov.uk

Should accessible formats such as large type, audio cassette or a language other than English be required, please contact the Customer Services Manager at Forest Service Headquarters and appropriate arrangements will be made as soon as possible.



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