

RHS Timber Policy - Information for Exhibitors at RHS Flower Shows 2009

The RHS Policy Statement on 'Trees and Timber Products' confirms the Society's commitment to forest certification. As part of the implementation of this policy, the RHS Shows Department requires that all exhibitors of timber products at RHS Shows are exhibiting only products that are manufactured from certified timber, and that exhibitors are offering for sale at least one certified product line or range.

The RHS Shows Department believes that FSC certification currently represents the best means of fulfilling the RHS policy objectives, and encourages exhibitors to pursue their own FSC certification (see section 12 below). As an interim measure, the RHS is accepting other certification schemes as an adequate means of complying with policy requirements. The purpose of this information document is to confirm which schemes are recognised, and to explain the required evidence that must be submitted by exhibitors.

The RHS is working towards full implementation of this policy at all the shows it organises or is involved in. This document outlines the requirements for all exhibitors at the RHS Spring Flower Show, Cardiff; Malvern Spring Gardening Show; Chelsea Flower Show; Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park. The BBC Gardeners' World Live Show is working towards full implementation of this policy.

We now require all small timber items to be shown to be from certified sustainable sources, and full documentation will be needed for timber items to be deemed to be exempt from the policy.

1) Why did the RHS introduce its policy on Trees and Timber?

- The RHS is concerned about the exploitation of forests and the potentially devastating effects on other plants and wildlife.
- The RHS is working to ensure that all timber at RHS shows is from well managed sources.
- The RHS believes independent certification confirms that the sources of timber are well managed and sustainable.

2) Why certification?

- Timber suppliers may claim that their timber products come from well-managed sources.
- Independent certification schemes are the only way to substantiate these claims.
- Independent certification bodies inspect timber sources to ensure that good management practices are being followed.
- They take into account any or some of the following factors: sustained production from forests, protection of biodiversity and the environment, the needs of local and indigenous people and assurance of legality.

3) What timber products need to be certified at RHS shows?

The RHS is working towards including all timber items for sale and for display at their shows in the policy.

a) Large timber items

Exhibitors will need to provide documentary evidence that large timber products (such as furniture, sculpture, bird houses etc) on display on their stand are manufactured from certificated timber (see section 7). Exhibitors must also offer for sale at least one certified product line or range.

b) Small timber items

Exhibitors are required to provide documentary evidence that small timber products (such as tool handles, picture frames etc) on display on their stand are manufactured from certificated timber (see section 7). Exhibitors must also offer for sale at least one certified product line or range.

c) Timber used in the construction of exhibits

The RHS encourages the use of certificated timber in the construction of your exhibit and for staging.

d) Which exhibitors are affected?

All exhibitors who are exhibiting any timber at RHS Shows will need to meet the requirements of the RHS Timber Policy. This extends to Show Gardens who may use timber for construction of features of structures within their designs, and to individual exhibitors who exhibit timber products in specialist marquees (e.g. Country Living Magazine Pavilion)

4) Do I need to provide evidence of certification if I want to exhibit softwoods?

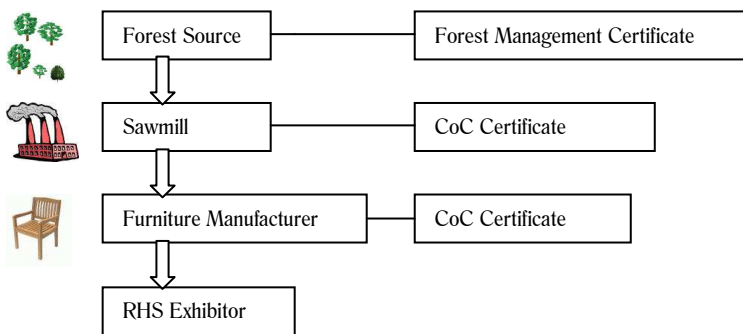
Yes. Although the destruction of tropical rainforests has received most publicity, the problems of poor forest management can apply to any forest type, including those growing softwoods. For example, forest management in Russia and Canada has received much attention.

Certification provides the only guarantee that timber sources are well managed.

5) What is a ‘Chain of Custody’?

To ensure that timber has been sourced from a well managed wood you need to know two things:

- 1) that the source of origin can be proven to be managed sustainably and responsibly;
- 2) that the product can be guaranteed to come from that particular well managed source.



Chain of Custody certification traces this supply chain from the source through to the end product. There may be several stages in the supply chain (eg from forest > sawmill > manufacturer > retailer). At each stage, it is important that certified wood is fully traceable, so that claims can be made about the end product. The only way to verify this is for each link in the chain to be inspected and certified. The RHS would like to encourage exhibitors to become Chain of Custody certified.

6) Claims for FSC Certification

You must hold a valid FSC Chain of Custody certificate if you want to use the FSC logo or make claims on your stand, on products or in any of your marketing materials about the status of your timber as coming from FSC certified forests. Comparable requirements also apply to the other certification schemes. This is because the trail from the source forest to the end product needs to be audited and verified. It is possible for even small companies to become FSC Chain of Custody certified, particularly with the introduction of the FSC group Chain of Custody scheme. This allows several small companies to join together to share the costs of being audited.

7) What certification is acceptable to the RHS?

a) Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

- Certifying bodies (eg SGS Qualifor, Smartwood, BM TRADAs’) issue certificates to the FSC standard.
- Global scope.
- Chain of Custody certification.
- End product can carry FSC logo / number if exhibitor is Chain of Custody certified.

b) Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC)

- Forest certification umbrella organisation providing a framework for the development and mutual recognition of national forest certification schemes. It currently recognises 18 national schemes in Europe and elsewhere.

- Auditing to PEFC endorsed standards by third parties.
 - Chain of Custody certification is available.
- c) Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI)
- USA certification scheme, also applicable in Canada.
 - Chain of Custody verification is available.
- d) Canadian Standards Authority (CSA)
- Canadian certification scheme.
 - Chain of custody certification is available.
 - Now endorsed by PEFC.
- e) Malaysian Timber Certification Council
- Malaysian certification scheme.
 - Chain of custody certification is available.
- f) Formal schemes for forests in transition to certification
- There are now four operational schemes that link buyers with producers who are working towards FSC certification. Member companies must agree an action plan leading to forest certification. The schemes are:-
 - a. Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) (in particular already has a number of members supplying to the UK)
 - b. WWF Global Forest and Trade Network Producer Groups
 - c. Smartwood 'SmartStep' scheme
 - Full Chain of Custody verification for any timber supplied under one of these schemes must be undertaken by an independent third-party.

8) What evidence is not adequate?

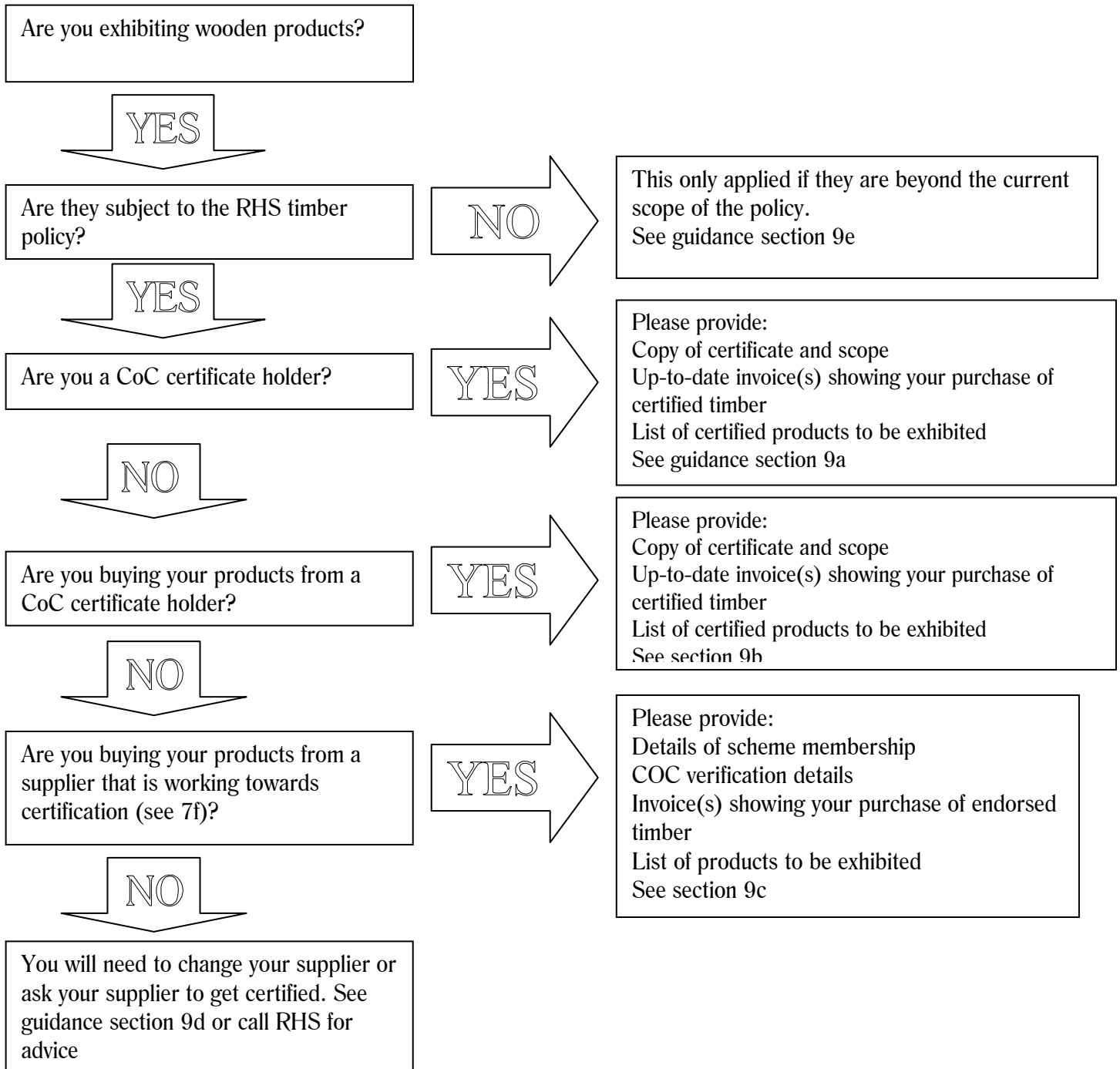
Examples of evidence that is not adequate include:

- a) Your company's Environmental policy
- No independent verification of the sourcing of your timber.
- b) Written confirmation that your supplier's supplier holds certification
- No guarantee that the timber being provided to you is certified (see 9d).
 - You or your direct supplier must hold the certification.
- c) Government certificates of sustainable forest management
- No independent verification of good forest management practices.
- d) Membership of WWF Forest and Trade Network groups or Timber Trade Federation / Forests Forever
- Gives guidelines on a company's purchasing policy.
 - Is a commitment for action or a statement of intent – not a guarantee of having purchased or manufactured specific certified timber products.
- e) ISO14001
- International standard for environmental good practice – but does not apply specifically to forest management.
 - This is a standard which measures systems rather than performance.
 - No Chain of Custody.
- f) Out of Date Certificates &/or Invoices
- No verification that your source of timber still holds certification and complies with the certifying body's regulations.
 - No verification that you have purchased timber to make items of current stock.

9) What paperwork do I need to send and when do I need to send it?

You need to send supporting information with your application for space. Exhibitors will not be considered for space until satisfactory paperwork has been received.

The following flowchart will guide you to the statement that applies to you:



- a) ***I hold an FSC Chain of Custody certificate, or chain of custody certificate under another scheme (see 7a-f)***
- Send a copy of your certificate, including its scope (details of what this certificate covers), with details of the ranges (including type of wood) that you will be exhibiting and have available for sale.
 - Send up-to-date purchase orders / invoices as proof that sufficient quantities of certified products/timber have been bought and are covered by your certificate.
 - We will need signed confirmation that you will only be exhibiting timber products covered by this certificate and will be able to offer a range of certified products for sale.
- b) ***I source my timber/final product from a certified supplier (who holds a Chain of Custody certificate)***

- Send a copy of your supplier's certificate, including its scope.
 - Send up-to-date purchase orders / invoices as proof that sufficient quantities of certified products/timber have been bought for exhibit and sale. The invoice must state that the timber bought is certified and under which scheme.
 - We will need signed confirmation that you will only be exhibiting timber products covered by this certificate and will be able to offer a range of certified products for sale.
- c) *I source my timber / products from a supplier working towards certification (eg through membership of TFT)*
- Send details of the membership status of your timber suppliers and/or the forest origin.
 - Send verification of chain of custody as proof that wood / products have been bought from this supplier.
 - We will need signed confirmation that you will only be exhibiting timber products from the named supplier holding or working towards certification.
- d) *I source my timber/products from a supplier who does not hold chain of custody certification but sources their timber from a supplier further up the supply chain who does hold chain of custody or forest certification.*
- You must change your supplier to one that holds chain of custody certification.
 - Unless your supplier themselves hold chain of custody certification we will be unable to verify this claim. Your direct supplier must hold the certificate and you must supply invoices to prove purchase (see 9b)
- e) *I source my timber from a source that is outside the scope of forest management certification*

Exhibitors may apply for an exemption when the wood in question is beyond the scope of the RHS policy on timber. This may be when the timber species or product used is:

- Impossible to obtain from a certified supplier in a certified form
- From an extremely low risk source **and** is being manufactured in a very small quantity by crafts people
e.g. Chestnut hurdles from a local estate in the UK
Hazel coppice from own estate
- Recycled or reused wooden items
e.g. old barrels

Exemptions will not be granted for small items made from timber from high-risk sources or in any case where the species and source of wood is unknown.

Please note that driftwood products are subject to, and are not automatically exempt from, the RHS Timber Policy. Exemptions may be granted case by case, based on information provided by the exhibitor.

If there is any doubt regarding the wood, the exhibitor will be required to provide adequate **independent** evidence to the RHS that harvesting/collection of the timber does not contravene the principles of sustainability outlined in the various certification standards. In each case the exhibitor must demonstrate that the precise type of product used is integral to the intended display and that no alternative is possible.

10) How can I get certified?

- **FSC Chain of Custody, or other certification schemes**
You must buy from certified forests or suppliers. Only then can you apply for a Chain of Custody certificate. The Chain of Custody audit verifies that certified wood is traceable at all stages of the process to the end product. The FSC do not carry out inspections and certifications itself, this is done by third party certification bodies.
Becoming certified need not be prohibitively expensive even for small businesses. Please contact the FSC for further details.

11) Where can I source certified timber?

Details are available on the following websites:

Metafore/: www.certifiedwood.org

FSC: www.fsc-uk.org

PEFC: www.pefc.org

SFI: www.aboutsfi.org

CSA: www.csa.ca

MTCC: www.mtcc.com.my

TFT: www.tropicalforesttrust.com

WWF Producer Groups: www.panda.org/forestandtrade

SGS CSP: www.sgs.com/forest_services_?servicelId=8535&lobId=5548

12) What are benefits to me as an exhibitor?

- Exhibitors will only be considered for space at RHS shows once they have provided full documentation relating to any timber items they wish to exhibit.
- Only exhibitors who have certified timber will be allocated stands at RHS shows in 2009.
- Exhibitors who hold their own FSC Chain of Custody certificate and who confirm that they will only be exhibiting currently certified timber will have the greatest choice of sites and will have their sites confirmed earlier as their timber source is easily verified.
- Information on the timber policy is printed in all show catalogues.
- Exhibitors who are certified can provide assurances to customers that their products originate from forests managed to the highest social and environmental standards.
- Chain of Custody certified exhibitors can also use the FSC logo (in accordance with the FSC guidelines on labelling products and off product use.)

13) What is the RHS doing to ensure that all exhibitors comply with the policy?

- We will only allocate space to exhibitors once they have provided satisfactory evidence that their products come from certified sources. This will involve checking all details provided by exhibitors relating to their timber.
- Your Contract to exhibit at an individual show will specify the terms under which you meet, or are exempt from, the requirements of the RHS Timber Policy. Alternatively if you have been allocated space on the provision that you bring no timber products for sale or display, this will also be noted on your contract.
- The RHS have appointed an independent organisation to act as auditors. They will review paperwork submitted by exhibitors and give guidance to the RHS on any issues arising.
- The auditors will be present at the shows, and will make visits to all exhibitors selling timber products to verify that what is on the stand matches what was agreed in their allocation paperwork.

14) Provision of information.

- The RHS appointed auditors will want to ask questions about your timber sources, therefore it is very important that the staff who are on your stand are well briefed on the sources of your timber and the certification relating to your products. They should also be able to answer questions from visitors to the show.
- In order to help ensure compliance with the policy, when you are at the show you will be required to have a copy of your own chain of custody certification or approved paperwork on your site available for inspection at any time.
- All information provided to the RHS and the auditors both verbally or in the form of documentation will be treated as confidential and will not be disclosed to any third parties.

15) What is the RHS doing?

- The RHS is working towards ensuring that all timber products are procured from certified sources.
- Products for sale in the RHS shops are certified; all new timber furniture and fittings purchased by the RHS must be certified.

- The majority of RHS owned staging materials and the timber used by our Show contractors is reused from show to show, and from year to year.
- As contracts are renewed, we stipulate that our suppliers must, when buying new timber, make sure it is certified.

16) What is the RHS doing to help exhibitors?

- The RHS is committed to helping exhibitors achieve the aims of the timber policy.
- We are developing the policy and revising our guidance to exhibitors with advice from outside bodies.
- The RHS periodically organises seminars for exhibitors of timber products, facilitated by our auditors, to explain the issues and discuss the policy.

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