



## **FAQs on the Know the Rules booklet and Keep Your Distance vehicle sticker**

### **Q: What are they?**

A: The Know the Rules booklet and the Keep Your Distance vehicle sticker give straightforward messages about the legal requirements of the General Binding Rules and the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). The booklet and the vehicle sticker DO NOT replace the UKFS and associated guidelines. Instead they provide additional guidance and key steps to help those who work in forests to minimise the risk of diffuse pollution and so reduce pressure on the water environment.

### **Q: Who are they aimed at?**

A: They are relevant to anyone working in a forest but are aimed directly at forestry contractors and site managers. The booklet and sticker should always be used together.

### **Q: Why were they produced?**

A: To provide straightforward (and therefore simplified) on-the-ground guides to improve how forestry operations are planned, communicated and managed for the effective protection of the water environment.

### **Q: Do they cover only the legal (GBR) requirements?**

A: No, they also cover the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UKFS, although not in detail. Details of the UKFS are given in the Forests & Water Guidelines and in a forthcoming FC Practice Guide on managing forestry operations for water protection.

### **Q: Who was involved and who supports it?**

A: It was initiated by Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SEPA working together to promote the message of prevention rather than remediation. Confor, Forestry Contracting Association and Scottish Government help steer the initiative. It is endorsed by the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group, the Scottish Government's umbrella forum of rural land organisations, which includes organisations such as Scottish Land & Estates, NFU Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

### **Q: In some places the booklet and sticker don't reflect the UKFS Forests and Water Guidelines – why not?**

A: We needed to find a straightforward way to recognise both the requirements of Scottish legislation and the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UKFS. The UKFS is a benchmark standard for forestry across all the UK, and in Scotland we have specific water legislation too. The most relevant legislation is the Controlled Activities Regulations, which allow low-risk activities such as agriculture, sheep farming and forestry to be undertaken according to General Binding Rules (GBRs).

### **Q: Which one should forest managers comply with?**

A: All those working in forests should comply with the UKFS and, in doing so, fulfil their contractual terms for grants, approvals and licences. This will also minimise the risk and potential cost of remediation work and improve their reputation for good forest management.

**Q: Where there are differences, what should I advise?**

A: FCS advice is as follows:

- Compliance with the UKFS is always required.
- Many chapters in the booklet say to follow the 'Keep Your Distance' vehicle sticker – the buffer widths on the sticker are those recommended in the UKFS (and which are above the GBR requirement).
- In a few instances the sticker or booklet refer instead to the GBR requirement on buffer width - this has been done to keep the message straightforward for the lowest risk scenarios.

In detail:

- Applying inorganic fertilisers – The UKFS recommends applying inorganic fertiliser by hand within a buffer area.
- Preparing pesticides - The distance on the sticker relates to good forestry practice as defined in the UKFS. However, for watercourses up to 1m width, the sticker allows for a buffer zone less than recommended by the UKFS because in most instances the drains will likely be disconnected when ground preparation occurs.
- Applying pesticides – The distance on the sticker relates to good forestry practice and is over and above what is required by law.
- Storing fuel – The UKFS excludes the storing of fuels in buffer areas although this is not legally required under water legislation in Scotland.

**Q: Do you have a quick summary of this position for me to give to others?**

A: The Know the Rules booklet and Keep Your Distance vehicle sticker convey straightforward messages for all those who work in forests. They should always be used together. They do not replace the UKFS but provide a quick step-by-step guide to minimise diffuse pollution incidents.