



FAQs on the 2nd edition 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 convey straightforward messages about the legal requirements of the General Binding Rules which apply in Scotland 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 diffuse pollution risk 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 are instead given in the UKFS Forests & Water Guidelines and in a new FC Practice Guide on managing forestry operations for water protection.

Q: Who was involved? Who supports it?

A: The booklets and stickers have involved FCS, SEPA, Confor, the Forestry Contracting Association, Scottish Water, Scottish Government and previously the UKFPA, working together to promote the message of prevention rather than cure. The Forestry & Water Scotland initiative is endorsed by the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group, the Scottish Government's umbrella forum of rural land organisations, which also includes 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: In some places the booklet and sticker don't exactly reflect what the UKFS Forests and Water Guidelines ask for. This is because the UKFS is written as a benchmark standard for forestry across all the UK, but in Scotland we have specific water legislation. 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). Although the booklet and sticker focus on compliance with the UKFS, in some circumstances we needed to find a way to recognise both the requirements of Scottish legislation and, where relevant, the legal and good forestry practice requirements of the UKFS.

Q: Which one should forest managers comply with?

A: All those working in forests should comply with the UKFS in order to fulfil the requirements of sustainable forest management and good forestry practice. In complying with the UKFS they fulfil their contractual terms for grants, approvals and licences. This will also save them the risk and potential cost of remediation work and will improve their reputation for high quality 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 refers 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 narrower than 1m, the sticker allows for a buffer zone that are 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 do not replace the UKFS but provide a quick step-by-step guide to minimise diffuse pollution incidents.