

Te Uru Rākau



New Zealand Forest Service

Harvesting and milling indigenous timber



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Ministry for Primary Industries
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Harvesting and milling indigenous timber

This booklet explains the legal requirements for harvesting and milling indigenous (native) timber on private land. It outlines the options available to landowners and clarifies the responsibilities of sawmillers operating under Part 3A of the Forests Act 1949.

Understanding Part 3A of the Forests Act 1949

Part 3A of the Forests Act explains how landowners can mill indigenous timber while still looking after their forest. It recognises that landowners should be able to earn income from their own land. It also makes sure indigenous forests stay healthy and continue to support wildlife and the wider ecosystem.

Part 3A of the Forests Act restricts the milling, exporting and in some cases, the harvesting of indigenous timber. This means you can only harvest and mill indigenous timber if you have one of the following:

- a sustainable forest management (SFM) plan;
- a sustainable forest management (SFM) permit;
- a personal use approval;
- a milling statement.

Sawmills that mill indigenous timber must also be registered with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

The type of approval you apply for depends on:

- the source of the timber;
- how much you plan to mill;
- how you intend to use the timber.

Part 3A of the Forests Act is administered by Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service which is part of MPI.

Sustainable forest management (SFM) plans and permits

SFM plans and permits provide long-term frameworks for managing indigenous forests. They may require you to protect rare or endangered species and manage any introduced pests on your site.

SFM plans and permits must be registered against the land title.

SFM plans

- Last at least 50 years.
- Require a forest inventory.
- Allow ongoing, sustainable harvesting based on approved annual allowable cut volumes for each species.

Your harvest rate will depend on the:

- size and type of forest;
- amount, growth and replacement rates of the species you want to harvest.

SFM permits

- Last for 10 years.
- Allow harvesting within maximum volume limits:
 - up to 250 cubic metres of podocarp, kauri, shade-tolerant hardwoods; and
 - up to 500 cubic metres of beech and light-demanding hardwoods;
 - or 10 percent of the standing volume, whichever is less.

Annual logging plans

Before any harvesting happens under a registered SFM plan or permit, you must submit an annual logging plan. This includes:

- species and volumes you'll harvest;
- harvest methods;
- location maps, topography, waterways, tracks and landings;
- any special logging requirements.

MPI must approve the annual logging plan before you can start harvesting. You must keep a record of all timber harvested and send the record to MPI.

Milling indigenous timber without an SFM plan or permit

In one-off or small-scale situations, indigenous timber may be milled under a milling statement or a personal use approval, as long as the land is not subject to a registered SFM plan or permit.

You must always get approval from MPI before milling.

Personal use approvals

Landowners can apply to harvest and mill up to 50 cubic metres of indigenous timber over a 10-year period. The timber must be for your own use. This means you cannot sell or trade the timber under this approval.

You must have written approval from MPI before harvesting.

Milling statements

Milling statements are suitable for timber from a range of specific sources and situations. A milling statement allows you to sell, keep or give away the timber.

You can apply for a milling statement to harvest or mill timber from:

- standing dead or windthrown trees (the trees must have died or fallen over naturally);
- salvaged timber;
- a planted indigenous forest;
- a forest registered as permanent forestry in the Emissions Trading Scheme at the time of harvest;
- timber first milled before 1 July 1993;
- tree ferns;
- specified Māori land;
- land managed by the Crown under the Conservation Act 1987, or any Act listed in Schedule 1 of the Conservation Act 1987;
- trees cut down to construct or maintain an accessway or water impoundment, or for a mining operation, scientific research, or a public work.

Responsibilities of registered sawmillers

All sawmills that process indigenous timber must be registered with MPI. Anything that produces sawn timber is defined as a sawmill. This includes “Alaskan” style chainsaw sawmills.

Registered sawmills must only mill timber that has been approved under one of the following:

- an annual logging plan from a SFM plan or permit;
- a personal use approval;
- a milling statement.

Sawmillers must also:

- keep accurate records of all indigenous timber they receive and mill;
- submit three-monthly returns of all indigenous timber they receive;
- sight and retain a copy of the relevant approval for each log load.

Registration lasts for one year. The registration year for sawmills is from 1 July to 30 June. If you want to keep milling after 30 June, you must register your sawmill again. There is an annual registration fee.

Know your options for managing and milling indigenous timber and contact MPI for advice before taking action.

Export controls

Exporting indigenous timber is restricted. If you want to export indigenous timber, stumps, or logs, you must tell MPI first. MPI will inspect the material and approve it before it can be exported.

You can export finished products made from indigenous timber without MPI approval.

A product is not considered finished if it:

- still looks like a log or sawn timber;
- could reasonably be processed further;
- still has other practical or economic uses.

Application forms to mill indigenous timber

Download application forms from:

mpi.govt.nz/harvesting-milling-native-indigenous-timber

Or scan the QR code using your phone's camera.



Where to get help

This leaflet only provides a brief summary.

Contact the Indigenous Forestry team at Te Uru Rākau – New Zealand Forest Service for more advice on approvals relating to indigenous forestry.

Email: indigenous.forestry@mpi.govt.nz

Phone: 0800 00 83 33

Christchurch Office

Private Bag 4765

Christchurch 8140

Rotorua Office

PO Box 1340

Rotorua 3040

More information

For more guidance and to find out how to apply for each approval, refer to the MPI website:

mpi.govt.nz/harvesting-milling-native-indigenous-timber



Find out more about exporting indigenous timber:

mpi.govt.nz/exporting-native-indigenous-timber-and-timber-products





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