

# Forestry Commission simplify felling licence applications to protect trees and people



In response to pests and disease outbreaks, and public safety risks, the Forestry Commission has today (Wednesday 22 September) announced it is taking action to simplify part of the felling licence application process in certain circumstances.

A limited number of felling licence applications directly related to the management of tree pests and diseases may be exempt from being included on the Public Consultation Register before the trees are felled, where the Forestry Commission deem that tree felling needs to be expedited for an overriding biosecurity or public safety benefit.

The change will come into effect from 8 November 2021 and will be applied by the Forestry Commission to very specific situations, for example to prevent the spread of quarantine pests or diseases, such as *Ips typographus* (spruce bark beetle), or to facilitate the prompt removal of ash trees infected with ash dieback and growing within falling distance of roads. It does not impact on other conditions related to the issuing of felling licences, such as the need to restock. The outcome of all felling licence applications will continue to be published on the [Forestry Commission Decision Public Register](#), for public record.

**Prof Nicola Spence, the UK's Chief Plant Health Officer, said:**

To protect trees and woodland cover, tree felling is a carefully controlled activity. This change has been made to accelerate a small number of applications where swift action is required to deal with specific tree pests and diseases as part of our strong response to the management of these threats.

Everyone involved in the felling of trees must always ensure that a felling licence or other permissions are in place before any felling is carried out. It is an offence to fell trees without a felling licence where one would have

been required, and anyone involved (the owner, agent and timber merchant or contractor) can be prosecuted.

You can [apply online for a felling licence](#).

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