

What is FSC?

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-profit organization devoted to encouraging the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC sets high standards that ensure forestry is practiced in an environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable way. Under FSC certification, forests are certified against a set of strict environmental and social standards, and fiber from certified forests is tracked all the way to the consumer through the Chain-of-Custody certification system. The end result is a product in the marketplace carrying the FSC logo. For more information about FSC, please visit www.fsc.org.

Trusted environmental organizations including Greenpeace, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund all support and encourage FSC certification. Consumers wishing to support healthy forests and communities should look and ask for the FSC label when purchasing wood or paper products.

What is the FSC System?

There are two parts to the FSC system:

1. Forest Management certification ensures that the forest is managed to high standards covering social, environmental and economic issues.
2. Chain of Custody certification traces the wood from those forests through all stages of processing and distribution.

What is Chain-of-Custody (COC) Certification?

Chain-of-Custody (COC) is the path taken by raw materials harvested from an FSC-certified source through processing, manufacturing, distribution and printing until it is a final product ready for sale to the end consumer. COC certification allows companies that manufacture and market forest products to label them with the FSC brand consistent with FSC policies.

Why is Chain-of-Custody Necessary?

While consumers already select forest products based on species, grade, visual characteristics, etc., they now can identify products that provide an assurance of social and environmental responsibility on the part of the producer. To do this, the FSC system requires that material be tracked from the certified source through the manufacturing process. This aspect of the system is the basis for any credible certification system and is the link between consumer preference and responsible, on the ground performance.

How do you get a COC certificate?

1. Contact an FSC accredited certifier. FSC accredits third party companies to conduct audits. This allows FSC to maintain the independence and integrity of its policies and standards. Go to <http://www.fscus.org/certifiers/> for a list of certifiers.
2. Submit an application to the certifier
3. Complete an on-site assessment
4. Receive certification approval
5. Undergo annual audits

Who conducts the certification assessment?

FSC accredits independent, 3rd party auditors to conduct COC certification assessments of interested companies. Although the accredited certifiers assess companies based on FSC's policies for COC, each certifier uses his own evaluative process. This allows FSC to remain outside the assessment process and supports the integrity of the policies and the FSC system.

Who makes sure that Chain of Custody works?

The accredited certifiers audit systems to track certified material in each client's specific context. The certifiers review each client annually in their handling of certified wood in the production process. FSC then conducts annual audits of each accredited certifier to make sure they are following established policy guidelines for the COC process.

What is needed to earn Chain of Custody?

These are the steps needed to earn a certificate:

Find suppliers that have their own current FSC COC certification that covers the FSC certified material they are (or will be) selling to you; set up your COC Quality Management system as below; define the Product Groups that will be sold with an FSC label; contact a Certification Body (CB) to arrange an assessment.

There are four parts to the CoC Quality Management system that a company needs to set up:

RESPONSIBILITIES

One person must be designated to take charge of the organization's compliance with the standard and all relevant staff must be aware of the requirements.

DOCUMENTED PROCEDURES

All the systems must be written up as a manual that can be shown to the CB.

TRAINING

The CB will ask for evidence that all staff with responsibility for these areas have had training. Records must be kept.

RECORDS

All documents relating to FSC certified product production, purchase and sales, as well as training records and copies of FSC trademark approvals (for labels and promotional purposes) must be kept for at least five years. An up to date list of all FSC product groups covered by the scope of the CoC must be maintained.

What are the Chain-of-Custody control systems and procedures?

There is not a set prescribed system. It is up to each company to set out how they will satisfy the requirements and ensure that FSC certified products are correctly labeled. The most important areas to cover are Critical Control Points where there is a risk of FSC and non-FSC material being mixed up.

Examples of these are:

- Goods in areas where staff taking deliveries must inspect documents to make sure they include the correct information; warehouses or yards where FSC certified and non-FSC certified timber or fiber, possibly of similar types, are stored; packing and labeling operations where products must be given the correct FSC label.
- For each Critical Control Point the company must show that the system ensures

Segregation: FSC certified and non-FSC certified product lines must be separable by clear marking in storage area or in time.

Identification: Batches of FSC certified material and FSC Controlled Wood must have secure markings.

Documentation: Copies of sales, purchase and shipping/delivery documents covering FSC certified products must be kept.

What are the Control Systems under the FSC chain-of-custody standards?

Percentage System

Use the Percentage System if:

- *You can achieve a rolling average input of *70% FSC certified (or FSC + post consumer reclaimed) material (*but see note on transitory requirements);*
- *You want to be able to label, or claim, all your production in that product group as FSC Mixed Sources.*

Transfer system

Use the Transfer System if:

- You are using 100% FSC certified wood as a raw material;
- You are using only FSC Mixed Sources raw material (from credit or percentage system);
- You are using 100% verified post-consumer reclaimed material;
- You are trading in, or packing, finished products;
- You are combining, within a single product, materials covered by different FSC claims but do not want to make complex calculations – for example, if you produce books with FSC Mixed Sources text, FSC Recycled cover and FSC 100% endpapers, you can simply use the FSC Mixed Sources label as ‘lowest common denominator’.

Credit System

Use the Credit System if:

- You cannot obtain enough FSC certified (or FSC + post-consumer) material to reach the *70% labeling threshold (*but see note on transitory requirements);
- Not all your customers want an FSC certified/FSC labeled product.

Note: With this system, you can only label a volume of your product group equal to the amount of FSC certified (or FSC + post consumer recycled) input. The rest can carry no FSC label.

What is an FSC Claim?

The reference on sales documents which is used to establish the content of FSC material so that you can work out how it fits in to your FSC product groups, and which label should be applied to the finished product.

This is the wording to be used on sales documents: it is NOT always the same as on the FSC on product label.

- When all material is from FSC certified forests the claim is ‘FSC Pure’.
- When the percentage control system is used, the claim is ‘FSC Mixed’ plus the actual percentage of FSC certified content. This may fall below the labeling threshold, when material is being supplied to another FSC CoC operation as input.
- When a credit system is used including virgin material, the claim is ‘FSC Mixed Credit’.
- When a credit system is used including only reclaimed material, the claim is ‘FSC Recycled Credit’.
- For verified post-consumer recycled material, the claim is ‘FSC Recycled’.
- For FSC Controlled Wood, the claim is ‘FSC Controlled Wood’. No label can be used for this: it is only for sale into FSC certified operations. In a credit system, the non-FSC labeled portion can be sold as ‘FSC Controlled Wood’ provided that this is specified in the scope of the COC.

Having checked that all requirements have been met, and that the products in a given product group meet the levels of FSC certified content as set out for the system being used, they may be labeled with the appropriate FSC Label.

What is FSC Controlled Wood?

This is a standard which controls the risk of wood from controversial forest sources entering FSC labeled product groups. There are two Controlled Wood standards, one for forest managers (FSC-STD-30-010) and one for manufacturers (FSC-STD-40-005).

The risks which must be ruled out are:

- Illegal logging
- Logging in areas where there is violation of traditional or civil rights
- Logging in forests in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities
- Logging in areas being converted from forests and other wooded ecosystems to plantations or non-forest uses
- Forests in which genetically modified (GM) trees are planted
- Suppliers of FSC Controlled Wood will have a certificate in the format CB-CW/FM-1234. This is to be referenced on FSC claims and all business-to-business communication but FSC Controlled Wood cannot carry any FSC label or be advertised using FSC trademarks. A company cannot make any public claims about controlled wood.



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MEMORANDUM

To: LEED Users
From: USGBC
Date: April 7, 2008
Subject: Revised Requirements for Documenting the Use of FSC Certified Wood in LEED

Distribution:

In an effort to align FSC rules and LEED requirements utilizing chain-of-custody (COC) documentation for the use of FSC certified wood, the MR TAG has approved the revised guiding language in LEED Rating Systems as follows:

All vendor invoices for permanently-installed wood products, both FSC certified and not, purchased by the project contractor and subcontractors must be compiled. Vendors are defined as those companies that sell products to the project contractor or subcontractors.

The cost of all wood products, both FSC certified and not, must be tallied on the appropriate LEED document (e.g., MRc7 template). Wood products that are not FSC certified and those that are identified on invoices as "FSC Pure" and "FSC Mixed Credit" should be valued at 100% of the product cost. Wood products identified as "FSC Mixed [NN]%" should be valued at the indicated percentage of their cost, e.g., a product identified as "FSC Mixed 75%," should be valued at 75% of the cost. (Wood products identified as "FSC Recycled" or "FSC Recycled Credit" do not count toward certified wood credits. They qualify instead as recycled content products).

Each vendor invoice must conform to the following requirements (except as noted in the Appendix under 'Exceptions'):

- a. Each wood product must be identified on a line-item basis;
- b. FSC products must be identified as such on a line-item basis;
- c. The \$ value of each line item must be shown;
- d. The vendor's COC certificate number must be shown on any invoice that includes FSC products.

Note that this means that each wood products vendor that invoices FSC certified products must be COC certified by an FSC accredited certifier.

APPENDIX

Exceptions: In some rare instances, it may not be practical for a vendor to invoice wood products on a line-item basis because the invoice would be dozens of pages long. In such cases, the invoice should indicate the aggregate value of wood products sold by the vendor. If the wood products are FSC certified:

- a. The vendor's COC number must be shown on the invoice;
- b. The invoice must be supplemented by a letter from the vendor stating that the products invoiced are FSC certified.
- c. The invoice or the letter must state whether the products are "FSC Pure," "FSC Mixed Credit," or "FSC Mixed [NN]%"

Errata to the applicable Rating Systems and Reference Guides, CIRs and templates are posted. Please contact Customer Service at leedinfo@usgbc.org with any questions.