



### **Wood Fuel Quality Association Scheme**

The scheme is based on NSAI NWA 4:2009

The scheme is open to all suppliers of wood fuel which meet the criteria in NWA 4:2009

This document describes the process from application to certification.

### **Pre Application**

Before making an application, the applicant is recommended to check the following:

- That they have a system which they have checked to ensure it meets NWA 4
- That there are sufficient records to demonstrate that they are compliant (this is normally between 2 and 3 months of records during a period when wood fuel is being produced)
- That the fuel(s) being offered for sale meet the specifications to which customers agree or which is shown on packaging
- That the key fuel quality parameters being measured internally are carried out in a way which ensures appropriate accuracy (sampling methodology, calibration of equipment, custody of sample, operator awareness etc.)

### **Application**

Applicants are required to submit an application form to NSAI together with an application fee of €200. The signature on the application form binds the applicant to the terms on NSAI's standard contract (CN-00-01) and addendum (CND-53-01) which are issued with the application form and available on the NSAI website. The application form lists the documentation to be submitted for an initial desktop review which will be conducted by the inspector who will be assigned to the process. All applicants will be provided with a receipt which will include the name of the inspector handling their application together with the file number which will be used as a reference on all correspondence.

If the application is made before all documentation or fee required is available, the process will be halted until the outstanding documentation is received.

### **Desktop Review**

NSAI will conduct a review of the documentation submitted. NSAI will provide feedback on any issues arising from the review. Some issues may have to be addressed before the site inspection takes place. When the documentation review shows that all required areas are addressed in the management system, NSAI's inspector will arrange a date for the site inspection.

An invoice for € 400 will be issued for the site visit at this stage.

### **Site Inspection**

All applicants will receive a half day site inspection by NSAI's inspector. This inspection will be based on the requirements of the applicant's quality system and the requirements of NSAI's NWA 4:2009.

During the visit a sample of the wood fuel will be taken by the inspector in the presence of the applicant. The fuel will be bagged, sealed and tagged for collection by a courier service (for delivery to Waterford Institute of Technology)

At the end of the site visit, a note of any issues identified on the site will be left with the applicant. The issues will be categorised as follows:

- **Major:** An issue which either concerns a gap in the management system (a clause not addressed in the NWA for example) or an absence of a process in the provision of the wood fuel which could or does impact on a quality parameter of the wood fuel.
- **Minor:** Any other lapse in compliance to the NWA or in practice against procedures or implied requirements for quality wood fuel.
- **OFI (Opportunity for Improvement):** A suggestion for improving the management system or practice (from the point of view of efficiency or effectiveness rather than compliance).

Major issues will have to be addressed before certification can be granted (this may be possible through submission of documentation (including photos) but may require a further visit to the site. Minor issues require an action plan; NSAI have the right to verify the effectiveness of closure of such non-conformances at any time but this will not halt the process of certification.

### **Sample Testing**

Sample testing to the relevant criteria in NWA 4:2009 is conducted by the Waterford Institute of Technology. Results of the testing will be included in NSAI's final report. Where the test results do not support the supplier's moisture content declaration or the NWA 4:2009 criteria, the supplier will be requested to take action to address the relevant issue(s). Action may require a further sample but might result in the supplier amending the declared quality of the wood fuel.

### **Final Report**

The final report will be issued when relevant actions have been agreed and, if appropriate, remedial action completed. This will include confirmation that all fees have been paid as invoiced.

### **Certification**

The report and accompanying documentation will be reviewed in NSAI's certification process which includes independent scrutiny. Upon a satisfactory review, the certificate will be issued and the success posted on NSAI's website under the listing of certified organisation.

### **Logo and Mark**

After successful certification, the supplier can use NSAI's scheme mark and the logo of the Irish Wood Fuel Association. The logo and mark may be used on advertising (including website), literature, stationery, signage, packaging, branding and vehicles.

The logo may not be used without the certificate number.

### **Surveillance**

A surveillance visit will be conducted every two years to renew the certificate.

**On-going Sampling**

Sampling of wood fuel will be annual (as a minimum) but is increased in proportion to the amount of fuel produced for market. The samples will be taken by qualified persons at any time during the year to meet the required frequency. Samples may be taken from the site or from delivered fuel within 24h of delivery.

**Withdrawal of Certification**

Certification can be withdrawn if the quality system or the delivered fuel ceases to be conforming. Voluntary withdrawal is also possible if circumstances change and the scheme is no longer appropriate. Certification will not be withdrawn without giving notice to the manufacturer/supplier of wood fuel and time (no longer than 90 days) is given to address any issues and to confirm their effective resolution.

Issues which might impact on continued certification would be expected to originate from either:

- Customer complaint or
- Failure of laboratory tests (to advertised fuel criteria) or
- Major issues found during an on-site audit or
- Non-payment of fees

There is an appeal process advertised on the NSAI website in case decisions made are considered unsound.

If certification is withdrawn or comes to a natural end, the following actions will be required:

- Return of any valid certificate
- Removal of claims to be certified from website and advertising material
- Removal from use of any packaging displaying any logo suggesting certification

**Insurances**

All applicants are expected to maintain public liability insurance cover to provide compensation in the event of an accident occurring which results in injury, death or damage to persons or property. In addition, it is recommended that insurance cover against negligence or breach of duty or failure to comply with approved standards be considered.

The amount of cover shall be appropriate to the risks but shall not be less than €100,000 or equivalent.

**Tax Clearance**

Tax clearance certificate is required to demonstrate that the business is in financial compliance.

**Health and Safety Statement**

In order to comply with current legislation, a health and safety statement is required. It is important that each certified company is seen to comply with the law and this provides a level of assurance that the inspector, when on site, is in a safe environment. The inspector will be expected to address any safety precautions advised by the auditee (PPE, access restrictions, emergency response etc.); if these impact on the ability of the inspector to carry out their work, this may result in additional cost if an unplanned visit is required.

**Scheduling of Certification Related Activities**

Scheduling of certification activities will be conducted, as far as possible, to suit the applicant's needs. However, bottlenecks in the system can not be avoided in periods of high demand due to natural constraints on personnel and laboratory capacity. It is recommended that certification work be planned in advance and that a degree of flexibility be anticipated.

**Complaints**

Complaints regarding the quality of wood fuel from any certified wood fuel manufacturer or supplier are covered by the NWA 4 scheme. In the first instance, the manufacturer/supplier is expected to record the issues and any correspondence and to resolve the concern as quickly as possible; such complaints may cover fuel quality or service. Compliant records will be viewed during the on-site audit.

In the event of a complaint being made to NSAI concerning a certified supplier or manufacturer, the matter will be initially discussed with the supplier / manufacturer. In cases where the issue can not be resolved through the certified complaints process, the matter may be elevated to a dispute; in such cases an additional inspection or test may be required. The protocol for such tests involves the customer paying for the test if the complaint is unfounded but the supplier / manufacturer responsible for all costs if found responsible for the issue in the complaint.

Serious complaints may result in the withdrawal of certification.