



# ForestFit™



Responsible  
Wood RW/1-10-1

## DEEMED TO COMPLY GUIDANCE

V02\_JUL2024





# The ForestFit™ Standard

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ForestFit™ Standards and Certification scheme provides a whole of business approach to support sustainable, safe and environmental business practices to strengthen future viability of forest contracting businesses.

ForestFit™ Standards include:

- Standard 1: Mandatory Requirements
- Standard 2: Business Sustainability
- Standard 3: Work Health and Safety
- Standard 4: Environmental Practices

ForestFit™ was designed to meet the principles of AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17067:2015 Conformity assessment - Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification. ForestFit™ is endorsed by the internationally recognised bi-national government Joint Accreditation System of Australian and New Zealand (JASANZ).

ForestFit™ Standards utilise the requirements outlined by AS/NZS ISO/IEC 9001, 14001 and 45001. The criteria were developed with a risk based approach for management systems and further contextualised for contracting businesses undertaking harvest, haul, civil, silviculture and/or minor forest products operations. Audits are conducted annually by independent third party certifying bodies (CBs) that are accredited by JASANZ.

ForestFit™ criteria has been benchmarked to ensure alignment with relevant contracting business criteria within recognised Australian Forestry Certifications – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Responsible Wood (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, PEFC). ForestFit™ is owned by the Australian Forest Contractors Association.

# Responsible Wood AS/NZS 4708:2021

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The Australian Standard® for Sustainable Forest Management (AS/NZS 4708) provides forest managers with economic, social, environmental and cultural criteria and requirements that support management of forests for products and services.

The Standard is used by all participants in the Responsible Wood certification scheme. The Standard is intended for voluntary application to any forest area being managed in Australia or New Zealand, regardless of size or ownership, to produce forest products and forest services, whether from native or planted forests. It can be utilised by forest managers who are seeking independent, accredited third-party certification of their forest management system and practices.

## ‘Deemed to Comply’ principle

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Forest managers utilise AS/NZS 4708 to certify that their native or planted forest product was grown and harvested at a location that was managed in accordance with the a set of predetermined and clearly defined requirements. This includes 21 criteria specifically related to operations undertaken by external forest contracting businesses.

To eliminate audit duplication a ‘Deemed to Comply’ agreement has been established with Responsible Wood. ForestFit™ certified businesses are assessed to these criteria as part of their annual surveillance audit, therefore may be excluded from the sample selection for the forest grower’s AS/NZS 4708 audit.

# Audit process implications for AS/NZS 4708:2021

## Forest growers/managers

- Forest growers certified to AS/NZS 4708 participate in audits timed generally to a nine month cycle to capture a range of seasons and operations.
- A sample of contracting businesses are included in the audit process.
  - To increase audit efficiencies and eliminate audit duplication, the sample of contracting businesses may only include non certified businesses.
  - Forest growers engaging ForestFit™ certified contracting businesses are deemed to have demonstrated conformance to the contracting business specific criteria of AS/NZS 4708.
- If all of the contracting businesses engaged by the forest grower are ForestFit™ certified, the forest grower can discuss with the certifying body reducing overall audit time and cost or focusing on other operational areas.

## Certifying bodies

- When certifying bodies apply the sampling methodology to select forest contracting businesses to be audited as part of a forest grower's AS/NZS 4708 audit, only non certified contracting businesses will be included.
- ForestFit™ certified business may be excluded from sampling selection.
- ForestFit™ certified contracting businesses have already been assessed and 'Deemed to Comply' (conform) to the contractor specific criteria of AS/NZS 4708 during their independent third party annual ForestFit™ surveillance audit.
- If all of the contracting businesses engaged by the forest grower are ForestFit™ certified, the certifying body can discuss options with the forest grower such as reducing overall audit time and cost or focusing on other operational areas.

## ForestFit™ certified business

- ForestFit™ certified contracting businesses have already been assessed and 'Deemed to Comply' (conform) to the contractor specific criteria of AS/NZS 4708 during their independent third party annual ForestFit™ surveillance audit.
- Therefore to eliminate audit duplication, ForestFit™ certified businesses may be excluded from the sample of contracting businesses to be audited during the forest grower's AS/NZS 4708 audit.



**Business type** Forest growers/managers

**Scope** Businesses producing forest products and services.

**Criteria focus** Elements of sustainable forest management embraced by the Standard:

1. Cultural sustainability
2. Economic sustainability
3. Environmental sustainability
4. Social sustainability.

**Forest type** Planted and native forests

**Frequency** Three year certification cycle with nine monthly surveillance audits.

**Contracting business specific criteria**

Clauses:		
5.3	7.5	11.2.10
6.1.1 (i) and (ii)	8.1	11.5.7
6.1.2	8.2	11.7.2
7.1	9.1	11.7.3
7.2	9.2	11.7.4 (a)
7.4.1	9.3	11.7.8
7.4.2	10.2	

**Principle** The 'Deemed to Comply' establishes efficiencies for the forest grower and the engaged ForestFit™ certified contracting businesses through the elimination of duplicated audit activities for criteria assessed under ForestFit™ certification.



Forest contracting businesses

Businesses undertaking forest operations of:

- Harvest
- Haulage
- Civil
- Silviculture
- Minor forest products

Risk based approach to the the development, implementation and continuous improvement of forest contracting business systems:

1. Legal and financial obligations
2. Business sustainability
3. Work health and safety
4. Environmental practices

Planted and native forests

Five year certification cycle with annual surveillance audits.

Deemed to comply by maintaining ForestFit™ Certification



The ForestFit™ Standard and Certification Scheme has been codesigned by national representatives from forest growers, forest contracting businesses, processors, industry associations, existing industry certification schemes and the New South Wales (NSW) Government in partnership with Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA).

The ForestFit™ Certification scheme has successfully met the international requirements set by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) resulting in JASANZ endorsement. JASANZ endorsement is an internationally recognised mark of credibility and an assurance of quality.