

Forestry Act Regulatory Decision for areas of woodland and forests in Wales damaged by Storm Darragh

In December 2024 Storm Darragh caused significant damage through windthrow and windsnap to forests and woodlands in Wales. If you are a landowner or manager and you intend to fell trees in Wales, you will normally need a felling licence from us to do so, as set out in the Forestry Act 1967, unless covered by a relevant exception. Windthrow is not usually covered by any exception unless it is no longer alive (i.e become detached at the root plate), presents an immediate danger that cannot be mitigated through other means (i.e closure through of access), or is considered a nuisance.

This Regulatory Decision does not change your legal requirement to have a valid Felling Licence where necessary, however, NRW will not normally enforce the need for a felling licence if you meet the conditions set out in the Regulatory Decision. If you fell any trees without a felling licence and do not meet the required conditions we will consider this an illegal felling and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

We have issued this regulatory decision to provide a degree of flexibility and reduce the regulatory burden on landowners and managers, to enable woodlands in Wales to continue to be managed appropriately in light of the large areas of damage resulting from Storm Darragh. For operations not in relation to Storm Darragh, or where felling is unlikely to begin before the Regulatory Decision is withdrawn there is an expectation that you should apply for a Felling Licence or Forest Management Plan.

Before carrying out any felling operations in areas damaged by Storm Darragh, you should check whether you are able to comply with the conditions set out in the Regulatory Decision. If not, you will need a felling licence.

You will still be required to comply with any other applicable legislation if using this Regulatory Decision.

For general queries regarding this Regulatory Decision please contact the Forest Regulations and Tree Health Team –

ForestRegAndTreeHealth@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk