



## WFQA - Scheme Rules

### 1.1 Introduction

The Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme is based on the National Workshop Agreement NWA 4:2009. The scheme is open to all woodfuel suppliers which meet these criteria.

This document describes the process from application to certification

### 1.2 Governance

The Wood Fuel Quality Assurance (WFQA) Scheme is overseen by an industry elected committee known as the Oversight Committee. Participants in the scheme can stand for election to the committee at the annual general meeting.

The scheme is administered by the Irish BioEnergy Association (IrBEA)

### 1.3 Pre Application

Before making an application, suppliers are first recommended to contract Noel Gavigan, the WFQA administrator:

Phone: 087 6845977  
Email: noelgavigan@irbea.ie

After this, they should ensure:

- They have a system which meets NWA 4: 2009
- 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).
- The fuel(s) being offered for sale meet the specifications shown on the packaging or delivery dockets
- 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.)

### 1.4 Application

Applicants are invited, at no cost, from woodfuel suppliers. The application form (2<sup>nd</sup> last page of this document) lists the documentation to be submitted.

- All applicants must maintain public liability insurance. The amount of cover shall be appropriate to the risks but shall not be less than €100,000 or equivalent. Current insurance certificates must be available during site visits.
- A tax clearance certificate is required to demonstrate that the business is in financial compliance. This must be valid on the date of site visit(s)
- Suppliers must maintain an up to date health and safety statement. It is important that each certified supplier 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 supplier (PPE, access restrictions, emergency response etc.).

### 1.5 Desktop Review

The WFQA administrator will conduct a review of the documentation submitted and provide feedback on issues arising. Some may have to be addressed before a site inspection takes



place. When the documentation review shows that all required areas are addressed in the management system, an independent inspector will be appointed to conduct a site inspection.

At this stage, applicants will be invoiced the relevant WFQA membership rate (last page of this document) which must be paid before the inspection takes place.

## 1.6 Site Inspection

All applicants will receive a half day site inspection by the appointed inspector. This inspection will be based on the applicant's quality manual and the requirements of 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 delivered to an approved laboratory.

At the end of the site visit, a note of any issues identified 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 site visit. Minor issues require an action plan; the WFQA administrator has the right to verify the effectiveness of closure of such non-conformances at any time but this will not halt the process of certification.

## 1.7 Sample Testing

Sample testing to the relevant criteria in NWA 4:2009 is conducted in a laboratory. Results will be included in the inspector'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.

## 1.8 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.

## 1.9 Certification

Upon a satisfactory review, a WFQA certificate will be issued and the supplier will be listed on the WFQA website.



### **1.10 Mark (Label)**

After successful certification, the supplier will be issued with a unique WFQA mark (label) that includes their name, certification number, period of certification and products certified. The mark may be used on any advertising (including website), literature, stationery, signage, packaging, branding and vehicles. The mark may not be used without the certificate number.

### **1.11 Re-Inspections**

Certificates are valid for 2 years and a re-inspection will be required for a supplier to renew their certificate.

### **1.12 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 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
- Failure of laboratory tests (to advertised fuel criteria)
- Major issues found during an on-site audit
- Non-payment of fees

An applicant may appeal any decision to the WFQA Oversight Committee. 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 mark/label suggesting certification

### **1.13 Complaints**

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

In the event of a complaint being made to the WFQA Oversight Committee concerning a certified supplier, the matter will initially be discussed with the supplier. In cases where the issue cannot 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.

If the complaint is unfounded, the individual who complains will be liable for the cost of the test, however if the complaint is upheld the supplier will be liable. Serious complaints may result in the withdrawal of certification.



## Application Form for the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme

Name of Supplier			
Address			
Contact Name		Function	
Telephone		Website	
Mobile		Email	
<b>Documents to be submitted with the application (Yes/No)</b>			
Tax Clearance Cert		Copy of Insurance Policy	
Quality Manual		Health and Safety Statement	
<b>Approx Tonnage of each Woodfuel Supplied in previous 12 months</b>			
Firewood		Woodchip	
Woodpellets		Briquettes	
<b>Confirm that the following information is made available to customers (Yes/No)</b>			
Moisture Content of woodfuel		Particle Size of Woodchip/pellet; or size of firewood/briquettes	
Weight or Volume of each delivery, or bag			

We hereby apply to join the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme as laid out in National Workshop Agreement (NWA) 4:2009, and subject to the fees as laid out by the WFQA Steering Committee

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Completed forms may be scanned and emailed to [noelgavigan@irbea.ie](mailto:noelgavigan@irbea.ie) or posted to

WFQA Administration, IrBEA, Enterprise House, O'Briens Road, Carlow

## Fee Structure for 2013

Type of Woodfuel	Individual	Small to Medium Company (<50 employees)	Large Company (>50 employees)
Firewood or Woodchip	€620	€890	Price on Request
Woodpellets or Briquettes	Price on Request	€890	€2,500

### Notes:

1. Individuals are defined as those trading under their personal name (ie: not a company) and companies supplying less than 1,000 tonnes of woodfuel per year
2. If a supplier produces and sells woodfuel from more than one location, or depot, an additional charge may apply
3. If a supplier produces more than one woodfuel (eg: firewood and woodchip) an additional charge will apply
4. Fee's include membership of the Irish BioEnergy Association ([www.irbea.ie](http://www.irbea.ie))