

Information for tenants, agreement and permission holders FAQ's Coronavirus (COVID-19)

We are continually monitoring Scottish Government's detailed announcements and guidance on the COVID-19 Route Map so that we can take appropriate steps, at the right time, to facilitate the restart of third party activities on Scotland's national forests and land.

The following is intended to provide information and guidance for tenants, agreement and permission holders on land managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

Please be aware that most FLS staff are continuing to work remotely from home and, unless in the case of an emergency, it is unlikely that a member of staff will be able to meet on site even with appropriate physical distancing and hygiene measures in place.

In most circumstances it will be the responsibility of existing tenants or agreement holders to determine whether the activity can restart per the latest [Scottish Government guidance](#), however we will adopt the following position on a range of activities:

Events

Permissions for events and group activities that were planned to take place between now and the end of August have been cancelled. The latest easing of lockdown restrictions permits a range of outdoor events and activities to take place from 24th August. However, before such events or activities can be planned or restarted, it will be necessary to comply with Scottish Government public health guidance and for FLS to have risk assessed the impact of the event or activity on our own forestry operations, visitor facilities and other forest users. Please be aware that it may not be possible to facilitate previously planned event/activity dates without at least 6-8 weeks notice.

Businesses within FLS visitor centres

FLS visitor centres have reopened but may be operating reduced opening times or services. FLS staff will already be liaising with relevant third party businesses operating from buildings or land within a visitor centre.

Businesses that rely on FLS car parks for trading or customer parking

FLS car parks have mostly reopened and FLS staff will already be liaising with third party businesses that have existing agreements to operate from these facilities.

Fishing

If FLS has already issued a fishing lease or permit, agreement holders can now exercise their fishing rights if appropriate physical distancing measures are in place and subject to adhering to Scottish Government guidance.

In a small number of locations FLS traditionally issues day permits for fishing. FLS will not be issuing new day fishing permits until further notice.

Shooting

Deer control activities managed directly by FLS either in-hand, or through Recreational Deer Management Permissions granted to third parties, will remain suspended allowing deer larders to be safely reopened (ensuring that all services that had been isolated or turned off during the period of closure are operating safely again) and for venison sale markets to restart.

Where FLS has issued a shooting lease, agreement holders can now exercise their shooting rights if appropriate physical distancing measures are in place and subject to adhering to Scottish Government guidance.

Mountain Bothies

All bothies, whether managed by the Mountain Bothies Association, another bothy association or FLS, will remain closed until further notice.

Mineral extraction

It is anticipated that quarry and other mineral extraction activities will restart if appropriate physical distancing measures are in place.

Agriculture

It is anticipated that agricultural businesses will continue to operate adhering to Scottish Government guidance and requirements.

Construction

Scottish Government guidance on construction is set out [here](#). All construction and related activity is anticipated to restart in a measured and controlled way in accordance with the phased approach set out in the Scottish Government Construction Scotland Restart Plan. This means that construction may now restart if appropriate physical distancing and hygiene measures can be implemented.

Survey work

It is anticipated that survey work, associated with construction activity, can restart if it is in accordance with the construction industry restart plan (see above).

Small scale non-essential survey work (e.g. habitat or other ecology survey work) may restart at the discretion of the Regional Manager if physical distancing and safe hygiene measures can be implemented.

Please be aware that FLS staff are unlikely to be able to attend any meetings on site before or during any survey activities.

Filming

Very small-scale (handheld) filming may be carried out per the guidance set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). Other filming requests can now be submitted for our consideration, but please allow at least 6 weeks lead-in time (other than filming requests for news events which should be submitted to media@forestryandland.gov.scot). Most of our staff are home-working and it may not be possible to arrange site or location visits unless these can be carried out under SOAC without being accompanied by FLS staff. Please contact the [relevant regional office](#) for the FLS filming request form.

Bee hives

Where FLS has granted permission for bee hives to be located on Scotland's national forests and land, this agreement will continue. Bee keepers can continue to access their hives but should implement all Government requirements relating to safe working, physical distancing and hygiene protocols.

FAQ

I am an existing tenant, agreement or permission holder for an activity or premises on Scotland's national forests and land. Can I restart my activities?

Scottish Government is implementing the [Route Map](#) to easing lockdown restrictions. Regardless of any rights that have been granted through a written agreement or permission issued by FLS, tenants and agreement holders should adhere to the Scottish Government advice and guidance. This may mean that whilst there may be an existing agreement in place, the activity cannot yet take place until COVID-19 restrictions have been eased further.

Please refer to the specific scenarios, above, where we have set out our position.

I don't have an existing agreement or permission but wish to request one. Can I?

Applications can be submitted for our consideration but please be aware that most of our staff are home-working and it may not be possible to arrange site or location visits.

We will not issue permissions for events and group activities to take place before the end of August.

Permissions for non-essential routine, low key activities to be undertaken by individuals (not groups) may be approved at the discretion of Regional Managers having regard to Regional restart plans and adherence to the latest Scottish Government advice.

At this time all requests and documentation should be issued in electronic form to minimise printing needs and paper handling.

Due to banking restrictions, payment can only be made by direct electronic bank transfer. We do not currently have the facility to bank cheques or take card payments.

I am a commercial tenant on Scotland's national forests and land and my business premises remain closed, or have restricted opening, in line with the Scottish Government Route Map. Will I be able to get rent relief?

UK Government has put in place temporary measures to ensure that all commercial tenants will be protected from eviction if they are unable to pay their rent due to COVID-19. Furthermore, landlords and tenants are being encouraged to have open conversations about the situation and, where appropriate, reach voluntary agreement on the ongoing payment of rent.

FLS is a responsible landlord and we want to ensure that tenants and other agreement holders are fairly treated and where possible are appropriately supported during this unprecedented time. As such, if any of our tenants or agreement holders have temporarily ceased trading (whether through enforcement or voluntarily) as a direct result of COVID-19 please contact FLS to discuss rent support options. FLS will take the following into account:

- if you pay in arrears or in advance
- if you have rent insurance in place
- Any existing rent debts
- Rent deferment or Repayment plan proposals

Please contact your Area Land Agent or, alternatively, email us at enquiries@forestryandland.gov.scot