

Introduction to the DCS 'Fit and Competent' Register

Why have a register?

The Deer Commission for Scotland (DCS) is required to ensure that anyone authorised to take or kill deer, at night or during the close season, is a 'fit and competent person' (Section 37, Deer (Scotland) Act 1996). The individual(s) authorised to take or kill are known as the "nominated controller(s)".

Who needs to be on the register?

Only controllers who cull deer under DCS authorisations need be on the register. Controllers culling deer under Section 26 (2a, b & c) of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996, these being the occupier, owner, owner's employees and any other person normally resident on the land are **excluded** from the need for an approval from DCS.

In this regard DCS advise the following interpretations:

- **Occupier**- any tenant or sub-tenant, including sporting tenants provided they have a legally binding tenancy agreement.
- **Employee**- anyone holding a legally binding contract of employment.

Deer controllers who do not meet the above criteria must be approved in writing by DCS as being 'Fit and Competent' and are advised to get their names on the DCS register.

All controllers who cull deer under section 5(6) authorisations to prevent damage to unenclosed woodland, the natural heritage or in the interests of public safety or under section 18(2) for night shooting are also advised to get their names on the register.

I am entitled to cull deer under the terms of Section 26(2) (2a, b &c) of the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996, do I still need to be authorised by DCS to cull deer under section 5(6) & 18(2)?

Yes, anyone culling deer out of season to prevent damage to unenclosed woodland, the natural heritage, or in the interest of public safety (section 5(6)) must be authorised by DCS. Likewise all night shooting of deer in Scotland must be authorised by DCS.

How do I get on to the DCS 'Fit and Competent' Register?

You can apply to DCS by either submitting a copy of a Deer Management level 2 Qualification (DMQ2) which has been obtained within five years of the authorisation application or by providing two references . Please note:

- Currently 'Fit and competent' status via DMQ 2 is only valid for a period of five years. For example a person who obtained their DMQ2 4 years ago will be accepted on to the DCS register for a period of one year. Thereafter they will need to reapply.

Acquiring DCS 'Fit and Competent' status by providing two referees for each nominated controller.

Referees will be asked to provide the following:

- Details of their own relevant qualifications and/or experience
- Clarification of their relationship with the applicant
- Confirmation that they themselves are familiar with, and follow, relevant Best Practice associated with the culling of deer

What do my referees need to know?

Your referees need to have knowledge of and be familiar with all the published Best Practice guides associated with the competent culling and larding of deer. Referees should also be in a position to assess your knowledge and ability to comply with current Best practice.

Will I or my referees be contacted by the DCS?

DCS staff may contact you or your referees if there is a need to clarify existing or source additional information. DCS staff interviews a random sample of referees and nominated controllers. A small proportion of the nominated controllers will also be field tested on relevant aspects of Best Practice.

I am unable to provide the Deer Commission with two references; does this mean I am automatically excluded from being on the DCS register?

No, DCS recognise that on rare occasions an individual may not be able to provide the two references. In these circumstances a member of the DCS technical staff will arrange to visit the controller with a view to assessing for fit and competence. This will be done by questioning and field testing the applicant on aspects of the appropriate published Best Practice guides.

How long will an approved nominated controller remain on the DCS register?

On being assessed fit and competent against the published Best Practice guides nominated controllers will be added to the register. Approved controllers will remain on the register for five years (the length of the period may be subject to review by DCS) unless relevant information that could affect their status comes to the attention of DCS. After five years they will require to be reassessed.

How can I acquire the Fit and Competent forms?

Fit and Competent forms can be sourced by either requesting hard or electronic copies from either DCS office in Stirling: 01786 446282, Inverness: 01463 725000 or by downloading them from the DCS web site, http://www.dcs.gov.uk/returns_cullAuthorise.htm