

All our sourcing is done under the Responsible Purchasing Policy (“RPP”), introduced by the Timber Trade Federation - the Government recognised body representing the UK Timber Trade – of which we are a member. The RPP requires us to thoroughly conduct Due Diligence on all our sourcing, in order to prevent illegal timber entering the UK and the findings are required to be independently audited.

The RPP is the system that ensures that all of our timber supplies are compliant with the European Union Timber regulations (“EUTR”) that was introduced in March 2013.

Further, where possible we try to source timber which is :

- Certified under the “FSC” or “PEFC” schemes. These are globally recognised schemes, which are accepted by the UK government as evidence the products are both legal and sustainable.
- Third Party Legally Verified – ie: OLB, TLTV, SGS. This can be seen as a stepping stone on the way to full Certification as above. These are global schemes which are accepted as evidence the products are fully legal, ie: produced from authorised concessions, conforming to all local laws and all taxes paid etc.
- Certified as legal through National Forestry Certification. National Forest Authorities will often Certify that timber has been produced in a legal manner, although naturally we review the validity of each countries schemes ourselves.

Under the RPP we start by investigating the availability of Certified or Verified timber before moving to lower forms of Certification. Although we also have to take account of such issues as ongoing availability and price levels, as end users are not necessarily willing to pay the premiums often required for Certified timber!

Obviously there are areas and timbers where formal Certification or Verification schemes are unavailable or not possible. To comply with the RPP & EUTR, we will now be required to make progressively more rigorous investigations in these cases, to ensure that the timber is not illegal. If in due course this means withdrawing from certain suppliers, countries or even timbers, then this is what we will do.

Going forward, the EU is progressing the FLEG-T action plan, so to formally sign Voluntary Partnership Agreements with producing countries (“VPA’s”). This will result in agreed systems that ensure timber legality in the countries of origin. The objective being stated as “... to combat illegal logging and strengthen forest governance, while encouraging sustainable economic development in countries that produce or process timber and export to the EU.”

Please be aware that the origin of the timber also plays a big part in what certification is possible, ie:

- The majority of timbers from Europe, are certified under either the FSC or PEFC schemes and (with the exception of Waney Edged, Fresh Sawn and Air Dried Specials) our European Oak is certified.
- While some African timber can be sourced with various levels of Certification, some countries do not have the infrastructure to implement this. In these cases we have to do more in-depth checks on its legality or withdraw from that source. Until recent years relatively little African timber has been available Certified or Verified. However these schemes are now much more commonplace and in future our African timber sources are likely to be predominantly Third Party Legally Verified. Fully Certified African timbers are sometimes available, although at a significant price premium and with limitations as to the size and specifications.
- America broadly does not adopt the main certification schemes, (hence a very small proportion of American timber has formal certification) however this is due to the nature of fragmented land ownership rather than any environmental issue. America is renowned for having had sustainable forestry practises for many decades and any timber from America is automatically classified as being of a very low risk of being illegal. Information is regularly published, which shows the forest volumes of America is increasing.