



WHAT IS CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY?

Chain-of-Custody (COC) is the path taken by raw materials harvested from an FSC-certified source through processing, manufacturing, distribution, and printing until it is a final product ready for sale to the end consumer.

WHAT IS COC CERTIFICATION?

COC certification allows companies that manufacture and market forest products to label them with the FSC brand consistent with FSC policies.

annual audits of each accredited certifier to make sure they are following established policy guidelines for the COC process.

WHY IS COC NECESSARY?

While consumers already select forest products based on species, grade, visual characteristics, etc., they now can identify products that provide an assurance of social and environmental responsibility on the part of the producer. To do this, the FSC system requires that material be tracked from the certified source, through the manufacturing process. This aspect of the system is the basis for any credible certification system and is the link between consumer preference and responsible, on the ground performance.

WILL COC CERTIFICATION INTERFERE WITH MY NORMAL BUSINESS PRACTICES?

Most likely not. From a production standpoint, there are almost always simple, cost-effective ways to monitor input and output of FSC-certified wood content in a manufacturing and/or distribution operation. From a management standpoint, the purchase and sales of a company's certified wood inventory is done in the context of the company's existing record keeping procedures and is kept in the strictest confidence by a contractual agreement with the certifier.



WHO CONDUCTS THE CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT?

FSC accredits independent, 3rd party auditors to conduct COC certification assessments of interested companies. Although the accredited certifiers assess companies based on FSC's policies for COC, each certifier uses his own evaluative process. This allows FSC to remain outside the assessment process and supports the integrity of the policies and the FSC system.

IF I AM A RETAILER, DO I NEED COC CERTIFICATION TO SELL FSC PRODUCTS?

Not necessarily. If you are not changing the product's form or packaging in any way, but will simply resell it as a retailer, marketing it as an FSC-certified product, there is no need to be COC certified. If you will be altering the package (including breaking open plastic wrapping to sell pieces that are not individually marked with the FSC label) or will remanufacture the material, then yes, you will need COC certification to sell the finished product as FSC-certified.



WHO MAKES SURE THAT COC WORKS?

The accredited certifiers audit systems to track certified material in each client's specific context. The certifiers review each client annually in their handling of certified wood in the production process. FSC then conducts

PLEASE NOTE: the above answer applies to retailers selling items to the general public. If you are a retailer selling to professional builders that are requesting FSC certification for LEED or other green building programs, you will need your own chain-of-custody certificate to provide to the professional customer as evidence.



IF I AM A PRINTER OR PRODUCE PACKAGING, DO I NEED COC CERTIFICATION TO SELL FSC PAPER TO MY CUSTOMERS? _____

If you wish to represent the paper as certified, and/or print the FSC logo on the final product, then yes, COC certification is required.

IF I AM WORKING ON SUPPLYING PRODUCTS FOR A LEED-CERTIFIED CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, DO I NEED COC CERTIFICATION? _____

The last person in the chain-of-ownership for materials being supplied to the construction project does NOT need COC certification, but the company that those materials are being received from DOES. For example, a contractor orders 30 sheets of plywood from a local lumberyard for a project that he himself will be installing at the construction site. The contractor will not need a COC certification since he is the "end consumer," but the lumberyard does need COC certification to prove that the materials have been tracked from an FSC-certified source. The contractor will receive an invoice from the lumberyard with the FSC-COC number clearly stated on the line item for the plywood, which will be needed as documentation for the pending LEED certification.



HOW DO I OBTAIN COC CERTIFICATION FOR MY COMPANY?

There is a several step process that must be complete before a company is granted a COC certificate:

- 1. Contact an FSC-accredited certifier.**
| A complete list of certifiers can be found at www.fscus.org/certifiers.
- 2. Submit an application to the certifier.**
| This application will give the certifier the necessary information to determine if COC certification is feasible for the client company.
- 3. Complete an on-site audit.**
| The certifier will send a qualified inspector to the manufacturing site to determine that appropriate systems will be in place to keep records of certified inventory. Upon completion of the inspection, the certifier will send an assessment report to the client for review.
- 4. Certification approval.**
| If the inspector deems that the facility and processes in place are adequate, he will grant a COC certification. The client and the certifier will both sign a contract agreeing to the terms of the assessment.
- 5. Annual audit.**
| The certifier will conduct an on-site audit annual of each client to ensure that the terms of the certification agreement are being followed. Certifiers also reserve the right to conduct short-notice inspections of the client's facilities and records.

for more information, please contact:
FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL—US
212 Third Avenue North, Suite 280
Minneapolis, MN 55401

PHONE: 612.353.4511
FAX: 612.208.1565
E-MAIL: info@fscus.org
WEBSITE: www.fscus.org