



SmartWood

Practical conservation through certified forestry

Chain-Of-Custody Certification: Commercial Printer

What is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified Paper?

FSC-certified paper incorporates a unique furnish component that truly promotes environmental and social benefits. In order to produce this paper, mills have secured fiber from certified forests that meet FSC Principles and Criteria that ensure the forest is being managed responsibly. This FSC fiber content is specified on each package or roll of paper. Like recycled fiber content, FSC-certified fiber is of increasing interest to paper buyers, users, and consumers.

Why Does a Commercial Printer Need to be FSC Certified?

In order to ensure that the FSC-certified paper you receive and ship to your customer maintains the integrity of the claim on the label, the FSC has established a certification called Chain-of-Custody certification. Chain-of-Custody certification is for supply chain tracking from the forest to the end user, though each company is responsible only for tracking FSC products from purchasing to shipping within their own operation. Certification is a public verification that you have the procedures in place to ensure that FSC certified paper will not be mixed with non-certified paper.

Who Provides FSC Chain-of-Custody Certification Auditing Services?

The Forest Stewardship Council has accredited a number of third party certifiers who know how to interpret the FSC third party Principles and Criteria. The SmartWood Program is a leading accredited certifier with over thirteen years of experience in Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody certification. SmartWood, with Headquarters near Burlington VT, has regional offices in the US, Canada, and around the world with a staff of trained and knowledgeable forest products managers, and a cadre of trained forestry and supply-chain auditors.

What are the Requirements for a Commercial Printer to Become Chain-of-Custody Certified?

For chain-of-custody certification, a SmartWood auditor evaluates a company to assess whether an adequate tracking and handling system is in place to ensure that FSC certified products will not be mixed with non-certified products. The company must demonstrate the integrity of the FSC certified product flow will not be compromised. The Chain-of-Custody certification process can take up to four to six weeks from assessment to certificate. The on-site assessment and follow-up report preparation typically requires about two days of auditor time. Annual chain-of-custody audits typically require approximately one to one and a half days of auditor time.

What is the Chain-of-Custody Certification Process?

The following are excerpted points from the *SmartWood Chain-of-Custody (CoC) Standards, December 2004* that are relevant to commercial printers. Please refer to the above standards for a complete overview of the guidelines used by an assessor for evaluation during a CoC assessment for certification.

Documented Control System

Company shall have a documented control system that details the following: 1) the company's procedures for the tracking and handling of certified material from ordering through final product sales and shipping, 2) the responsible personnel for the control system, 3) the forms and records used for certified tracking and handling and how they will be used, 4) the procedures for labeling and logo use, 5) the protocol for keeping records that pertain to certification. **Note:** After a service agreement is signed, SmartWood can provide companies with a documented control system outline that provides guidance.

CoC System Responsibilities

Company should designate an overall lead contact person as well as one at each facility or location, and level of production, who will be responsible for enforcing chain-of-custody procedures.

Purchasing and Receiving of Certified Inputs

- Specify FSC-certified material when ordering/purchasing inputs.
- Verify the certified status, percent of FSC-certified content, and volume received of inputs on accompanying delivery documentation.
- Verify an indication of the certified status of inputs on the product, e.g., labels, tags, FSC certification code.
- Store certified product together in a well-marked area.
- Maintain a distinguishing mark on certified product, e.g., color code, tag, and FSC certification code.
- Record certified inputs in inventory system.
- Not accept or purchase any paper made from illegal wood as per the SmartWood Policy on the Use of Illegal Wood.

Certified Product Processing

- Maintain physical separation of certified from non-certified materials during each stage of processing, e.g., batch runs.
- Maintain distinguishing marks on or with certified materials, e.g., use of unique tags on pallets of certified paper, while in transport for production.
- Utilize production records indicating certified products for each stage of processing.

Certified Product Shipping

- Store final certified products separate from non-certified.
- Utilize distinguishing marks or FSC/SmartWood logos and/or the Company FSC certification code on certified product packages.
- Record certified outputs in inventory system.
- Specify the certified status, percent FSC-certified if applicable, and its FSC certification code on sales and shipping/transport documentation.

Personnel Training

- Provide training/orientation on the handling and representation of certified products.
- Provide written instructions on CoC handling procedures and policies for certified products.

Certified Product Records

- Maintain records of all inputs, processing, and outputs of certified products for a minimum of 5 years.

Marketing, Advertising, and Public Information

- All public representation of certified product must be consistent with SmartWood and FSC policies as well as the type of certification being granted (exclusive vs. non-exclusive).
- All public information referencing SmartWood or the FSC must be reviewed and approved by SmartWood prior to use to ensure consistency with SmartWood Program guidelines. This includes product labels, catalogues, brochures, mailings, letters, manifestations to investors, etc.
- Company must maintain a file with all marketing, advertising, and public information pertaining to certified products.

What are the Chain-of-Custody Certification Policies?

- SmartWood certification contracts are written for a five- (5) year period. To maintain certification as per FSC requirements, the certified company must undergo an annual on-site audit; provide certified volume information to SmartWood for the last year, and complete up-to-date payment of related certification costs. Renewal after the initial five-years requires a new CoC certification assessment and elaboration of a new certification contract.
- The use of the FSC and SmartWood names and trademarks, as well as related public claims by the certified company must be reviewed and approved by SmartWood prior to release to the public.
- All information gathered during SmartWood CoC procedures is kept confidential and maintained in secure files at SmartWood headquarters.
- SmartWood performs audits of certified companies at least once every year on-site. The purpose of this visit is to verify compliance with FSC chain-of-custody tracking and handling procedures within the company's operation as well as to verify annual certified volume turnover. SmartWood reserves the right to visit the facilities of the company at any time, but usually provides prior notification and arranges for audits.
- As part of the FSC accreditation and auditing process of SmartWood, the FSC reserves the right to visit SmartWood-certified operations on a random basis. The SmartWood certification contract with certified operations requires that these operations agree to random visits by FSC auditors for the purposes of evaluating the adequacy of the SmartWood certification system upon notice by either SmartWood or the FSC.