



Legal Harvest Assurance

The [Forests \(Legal Harvest Assurance\) Amendment Act 2023](#) establishes a regulatory system for providing legal harvest assurance for the forestry and wood processing sector. It is expected to operate in a manner that will:

- assist in the prevention of international trade in illegally harvested timber; and
- strengthen the international reputation of the New Zealand forestry and wood processing sector; and
- safeguard and enhance market access for New Zealand forestry exports; and
- reduce the risk that timber imported into New Zealand is sourced from illegally harvested timber.

The legislation provides a way to ensure timber is harvested legally.

The legal harvest system will cover:

- forest owners, or those responsible for the harvest
- log traders
- primary or first-stage processors
- importers
- exporters.

Under the system, most will have to:

- register with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)
- show how they'll reduce the risk of dealing with timber that is illegally harvested (due diligence).

Under the system, forest owners or those responsible for the harvest will need to provide legal harvest information to the log buyer.

Some exemptions and thresholds will apply.

Forest owners will not be required to register unless they are also a log trader or exporter.

Anyone not required to register can still register voluntarily. They might do this if:

- they were exporting
- their customers were asking for evidence that showed timber was legally harvested.

When is timber legally harvested?

1. Timber is legally harvested if the person who harvests the trees or woody plants from which the timber derives—
 - a) has the right to harvest them; and
 - b) has all necessary legal authority to exercise that right; and
 - c) does not contravene the harvest laws of the place or country of harvest when carrying out the harvest.
2. If the harvest laws of a place or country are specified in a notice, a person may choose to satisfy the requirement in subsection (1)(c) only in relation to the harvest laws specified in the notice.
3. The harvest laws of a place or country are laws that—
 - a) affect how or whether a harvest is to be carried out; and
 - b) set requirements, conditions, or restrictions relating to—
 - (i) land and resource use; or
 - (ii) property rights or interests in what is harvested; or
 - (iii) property rights or interests in the land where the harvest occurs; or
 - (iv) access to the land where the harvest occurs.