



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.defra.gov.uk

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Your ref: 5524  
Date: 24/06/2013

Dear [REDACTED],

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Marksman Training and Accreditation**

Thank you for your request for information about marksman training and accreditation, which we received on 29/05/2013. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The information that you have requested is available from Defra's *Controlled shooting of badgers in the field under licence to prevent the spread of bovine TB in cattle: Best Practice Guidance*, which was last updated in May 2013, and can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/200909/pb13922-shooting-guidance-20130517.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200909/pb13922-shooting-guidance-20130517.pdf).

Contractors wishing to take part in badger control will only be given a licence to take part if they meet strict firearms safety and competence criteria, hold the right firearms licence and pass a specific Government approved training course. They'll also need to follow best practice guidance which is designed to make sure that the badger control is carried out safely, effectively and humanely. Farmers and the local police force will scrutinise all safety arrangements ahead of any activity taking place. Operators must be thoroughly familiar with the terrain, carrying out visits during daylight to check the area, carry out risk assessments and identify safe and unsafe shooting locations to ensure the safety of people, property and other animals at all times.

Within the licence application form applicants must state if (as far as they are aware) they, or any of the persons proposed as Controllers, i.e. those who will carry out trapping, shooting or vaccination, have been convicted of any wildlife-related or animal welfare offence. In addition to this, the names of those proposed as controllers are checked by Natural England and the police for known offenders. Natural England will also carry out monitoring visits to ensure that badger control is carried out safely and humanely.



Appropriate enforcement action will be taken if any operator acting under licence is found to be in breach of their licence.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours,

Defra TB Programme  
[Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Annex**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF