



# **POSSUM FIBRE RECOVERY**

NZFC TRAPPER BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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It is the expectation of the New Zealand Fur Council (NZFC) that possum trappers carry out their roles under the following Trapper Best Practice Guidelines.

**Do you  
know the  
expectations  
of possum  
trappers  
and fur  
harvesters?**



# Expectations

While it is recognised that, in the New Zealand environment, the common Brushtail possum introduced from Australia (possum) is a major pest, New Zealand Fur Council (NZFC) expects and requires trappers and fur harvesters to capture and kill possums using acceptably humane methods.

The NZFC also expects:

- The capture and killing of possums should be carried out with all due consideration to the broader environment and community
- While reducing possum numbers has major flora, fauna and economic benefits, such control should only be done using methods that do not put non-target species at risk
- Trappers and fur harvesters need to recognise that the capture and killing of animals is not always an accepted practice by all people in our communities.



## Why?

Trappers and fur harvesters should understand and recognize that they are the most visible part of the possum fibre supply chain. In this position possum trappers and fur harvesters are a potential target for public and consumer complaint should they be seen as non-compliant to law and accepted best practice.

All possum trappers and fur harvesters providing fibre (and other products) to New Zealand Fur Council members must follow the Best Practice Guidelines stated in this brochure.

To be able to supply into the NZFC supply chain, trappers and fur harvesters must:

- Hold a relevant and current industry certificate
- Carry out refresher courses at regular intervals
- Understand and comply with possum/pest control relevant legislation and regulations including the Animal Welfare Act 1999
- Abide by NPCA best practice guidelines
- Maintain minimum fibre quality standards when collecting fibre

**Possum  
trappers and  
hunters are  
expected to  
comply to  
legislation and  
regulations**



# Animal Welfare Act 1999

Possum trappers and fur harvesters who supply to New Zealand Fur Council members must operate under several pieces of legislation and regulation to ensure the pest is killed humanely. Trappers and fur harvesters agree to comply with these laws.

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 lays out a broad consensus around the treatment of all animals, including pests such as possums.

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1999/0142/latest/DLM49664.html>.

The use of traps is regulated by the Animal Welfare Act, and it also sets out offences for hunting and killing animals 'in a wild state'. Possum trappers are expected to follow generally accepted practice in New Zealand, as described in this Trapper Best Practice brochure.

Possum trappers and fur harvesters can use a variety of methods to both trap and kill possums. These include:

- Kill traps
- Cage or box traps
- Leg-hold traps
- Poison
- Shooting

Under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, a leg-hold or restraining trap must be inspected within 12 hours after sunrise on the day after on which the trap was set. Leg-hold traps must not be set within 250m of a dwelling unless permission to do so has been given by the dwelling occupier. Traps must be raised 70cm in areas that native birds inhabit. Trapped animals must be killed without delay when traps are cleared, and animals despatched humanely.

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# Legislation and Regulations

Bionet (National Pest Control Agencies) guidelines set out expectations for killing trapped animals.

<https://www.bionet.nz/assets/Uploads/Publications/A4.1-Leghold-Traps-2015-Nov-HR.pdf>

Possums must be confirmed dead before plucking or skinning occurs. As well as operating under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, possum trappers and fur harvesters may also be required to comply with one or all the following pieces of legislation and regulation.

- Current first aid certificate
- Approved Handler Test Certificate & Controlled Substance Licence (VTA's)
- Permission/approval from Medical Officer of Health or private land owner
- Firearms licence and a hunting permit (shooting) required for public land. Private land requires the permission of the landowner.
- Resource consents where applicable
- Public liability cover (insurance)
- Landowners permission
- DOC permit required for public land. (All Regional Pest Management Strategies are still bound by Animal Welfare Act regardless of regional differences).



# Certification

The NZFC appreciates all trappers and fur harvesters who follow the Trapper Best Practice Guidelines and their contribution that helps to control the possum population in New Zealand.

Please visit the New Zealand Fur Council website to confirm that you have read and understood these Best Practice Guidelines and to download your certificate. In turn holding this certificate ensures you meet current industry expectations outlined by the NZFC.

Please visit:

<https://nzfurcouncil.org.nz/certify>



# Links to important industry information

**Department of Conservation permits:**

[www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)

**Best practice guidelines:**

[www.bionet.nz](http://www.bionet.nz)

[www.epa.govt.nz](http://www.epa.govt.nz)

**New Zealand Fur Council website:**

[www.nzfurcouncil.org.nz](http://www.nzfurcouncil.org.nz)



# Minimum fibre quality standards

Minimum fibre standards are necessary to ensure consistent quality is delivered to the consumer for products made from fibre and fur on skins. There is a risk that consumers will be reluctant to buy products if the fibre/skins used in consumer products are inconsistent in performance. This will affect the ongoing viability of the whole supply chain as the consumer is the final decider on purchase.

Possums can either be hand or machine plucked. The supply chain does not buy fibre during December/January as fibre is of poorer quality because of the yearly moult.

Hand plucked fibre:

- Fibre must only be collected from the back and flanks of the possum
- Belly, head and tail fibre are NOT accepted
- Fibre must be a minimum of 20mm to 25mm or longer

- Contamination of soil, stones, vegetable matter and metallic objects must be removed before taking fibre to the collection agent
- Fibre must be dry – not wet/damp to the touch.

Machine plucked fibre:

- Plucking machine must be kept in good condition
- Fibre must only be collected from the back and flanks of the possum
- Belly, head and tail fibre are NOT accepted
- Fibre must be a minimum of 20mm to 25mm or longer
- Contamination of soil, stones, vegetable matter and metallic objects must be removed before taking fibre to the collection agent
- Fibre must be dry – not wet/damp to the touch.



**NZ Fur Council contact details**

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Version 1.2 - Printed December 2018

