

Muirburn and Heather Cutting

This is an old version of the page

Date published: 10 October, 2020

Date superseded: 12 January, 2021

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

Aim

The aim of this item is to maintain or improve heather moorland habitats through burning, swiping or cutting to create blocks of heather at different growth stages.

Well-managed muirburn or cutting will help provide year-round forage and cover for birds, other wildlife and livestock.

Eligibility

Land that is rough grazing with heather moorland is eligible.

You should not include areas of land covering rocks, scree, water, dense bracken etc. We will check this using the same approach we use to check land for the Basic Payment Scheme.

[Assessing your land eligibility](#)

On moorland, you must combine this item with the [Moorland Management](#) option if deer or livestock are present.

Paragraphs 32 and 33 of Schedule 7 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 provided the regulatory powers to suspend Section 23 of The Hill Farming Act 1946 which permits 'a person to make muirburn on land only during the muirburn season'.

However, provision has been put in place to enable the 'Muirburn suspension' to be lifted and this took effect from 1 October 2020. As such AECS contract holders with muirburn in their contract can resume muirburn operations from 1 October. Please contact your case officer, if you require to discuss this matter further.

It should be noted that the ability to carry out muirburn may change if the suspension powers of Paragraphs 32 and 33 of Schedule 7 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 are reverted to at a future date. A further update will be communicated, when appropriate.

Links:

[Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#)

[Suspension of Schedule 7, Paragraph 32 and 33](#)

Application requirements

You must prepare a muirburn / cutting plan.

This must show fire-free areas and the areas where you can burn and / or cut on a 1:10,000 map.

The plan must also detail your planned rotation and the number of hectares you propose to burn or cut each year under this contract.

If you intend to have individual burns or cut areas of greater than one hectare, you must also detail this in the plan.



[Muirburn Plan \(MS Word, Size: 129.5 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/AECS-update-2018---Updated-muirburn-plan-template---17-Oct-2017-with-twe--_--002--2.docx [Plan template]

Requirements

- you must burn or cut in accordance with the Muirburn Code
- fires or cut areas must not exceed 50 metres in width
- you must not burn within fire free areas, as detailed in your muirburn plan
- you must keep a record of the areas burnt or cut and identify their locations on a map
- you must maintain a diary

Payment

You can claim £76.68 per hectare of completed burn or cut.

You can claim for up to one hectare per area burn or cut, unless you have prior approval as part of the application process to burn or cut areas larger than this. Payment will be limited to the agreed size of the burn or cut.

You must submit with your claim the map which identifies the locations burned or cut for which you are claiming payment.

To support lowland bog management you can combine this item with following management option:

- [Lowland Bog Management](#)

Inspections

The inspectors will check:

- the location and extent of the work
- you have burn or cut in accordance with the Muirburn Code
- fires or cut areas have not exceeded 50 metres in width
- you have not burn within fire free areas, as detailed in your muirburn plan
- you have kept a record of the areas burnt or cut and identify their locations on a map
- you have maintained a diary

Additional guidance

[Supporting guidance is available for this item.](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change
Eligibility	Coronavirus bill

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

Download guidance

Click 'Download this page' to create a printer-friendly version of this guidance that you can save or print out.