

Soil Protection Review (SPR)

The aim of these rules is to maintain soil structure and organic matter, and to prevent erosion, compaction and damage to landscape features.

If you were required to complete a Soil Protection Review (SPR) 2010¹ by 31 December 2011:

A. You must

1. be carrying out the measures you have earlier identified in your SPR 2010;
2. keep your SPR 2010 available for inspection.

B. You must update your SPR 2010

1. at least once every year (including the year in which you began implementing it) by completing the annual review;
2. as soon as is practical if it becomes clear that the measures you chose are not working or if you change or adopt new measures;
3. as soon as is practical if you transfer land in or out, or when soil conditions change on your land which result in a change in risk or where your management systems or cropping practices change.

If you are required to complete an SPR 2010 for the first time in 2012 or a later year:

C. You must

1. complete your SPR 2010 by 31 December 2012 (or by 31 December of the first year you are claiming), with the exception of Part 4, Access to Waterlogged Land, which you must start completing from 1 January of the first year you are claiming;
2. carry out the measures that you have identified in your SPR 2010 from 1 January of the year after it is produced;
3. keep your SPR 2010 available for inspection.



¹ PB 13311 Soil Protection Review 2010.

When completing, updating and implementing your SPR 2010:

D. You must

1. do so in accordance with the instructions given in the SPR 2010 and the *Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management 2010 edition* (or any future replacement). Use either the SPR 2010 template or give the same information in a similar format;
2. take into account any specific guidance that the Secretary of State may give you;
3. comply with any written directions that the Secretary of State may give you about the management of your soils.

Post-harvest management of land

If your land has carried a crop of oil-seeds, grain legumes or cereals (other than maize) which has been harvested by either combine harvester or mower, then:

E. You must

1. meet one of the following conditions on that land from the first day after harvest until the last day of February in the following year (dates inclusive):
 - the stubble of the harvested crop remains in the land;
 - the land is left with a rough surface following operations such as ploughing, discing or tine cultivation;
 - the land is under cultivation sequences used to create stale seedbeds;
 - the land is sown with a temporary cover crop. If this becomes grazed out or cultivated out during the post-harvest period, a rough surface must be left as soon as conditions permit;
 - the land is sown with a crop within 10 days of having been prepared as a seedbed.

You will not break the post-harvest management of land rule if you have prepared the land as a seedbed but are unable to sow the crop within 10 days because the land is too waterlogged to access or because severe weather conditions make this impractical. In either case, the land must be sown as soon as practical.

Waterlogged² land

F. You must

1. record any activity on waterlogged land when you carry out any mechanical field operations such as harvesting crops, or using motorised vehicles, except:
 - where the area of waterlogged land is within 20 metres of a gateway or other access point;
 - access is required to an area of land that is not waterlogged;
 - the area is an established track to land that is not waterlogged;
2. take action to remediate any damage caused by accessing waterlogged land, if appropriate, as soon as possible within 12 months of the first month of access to the waterlogged land. You must also record access as soon as possible after the event in the Access to Waterlogged Land section of the SPR 2010 and record any action you have taken to remediate damage from the access.

2 Normal common sense definitions of 'waterlogged' apply. For example, soil will be considered to be waterlogged where the whole of the plough layer is saturated/filled with water by virtue of a high water table or water collected (perched) above a compacted soil.

The rules A to F do not apply:

- for any agricultural land which is common land unless you own or occupy the land and rights of common are not exercised by anyone else; or
- if your holding, excluding land subject to rights of common (unless you are the sole occupier of that common land), is less than 1 hectare. However, if you acquire additional land which means your holding becomes greater than 1 hectare, you must complete an SPR 2010 by 31 December of that year.

Crop residue burning restrictions

G. You must not

1. burn any of these crop residues:
 - cereal straw;
 - cereal stubble;
 - residues of oilseed rape;
 - residues of field beans harvested dry;
 - residues of peas harvested dry.

You will not break this rule if the burning is for:

- education or research;
- disease control or the elimination of plant pests where a notice has been served³;
- the disposal of straw stack remains or broken bales.

H. You must

1. comply with certain restrictions⁴ if you are burning linseed residues;
2. comply with certain restrictions⁴ if you are burning residues under the exemption for education or research, disease control or the elimination of plant pests.



Further advice and guidance

Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management 2010 edition (PB 13315) is available on our website at rpa.defra.gov.uk/crosscompliance/farmerguidance or from the RPA Customer Service Centre on 0845 603 7777.

Completing your SPR online brings additional benefits: the online SPR can be quicker and easier to complete than paper forms and it will remember information about your farm, making your annual review and any in-year updates faster to complete. You can access the SPR online through Defra Farm Surveys & Assessments service on Business Link at www.businesslink.gov.uk/defra-farming-online

³ Under the Plant Health (England) Order 2005.

⁴ These restrictions are set out in Schedule 2 to the Crop Residues (Burning) Regulations 1993.