



# Deer Stalking Certificate 2

## Approved Witness Briefing

Part 2 of 3

Working as an Approved Witness



## The role of an Approved Witness

Your main role as an Approved Witness is to observe that a candidate you are witnessing for their DSC2 evidence achieves the requirement of each Performance Criteria (PC) and associated Key Features detailed for that PC. When you are satisfied that a task has been completed in full, you will sign the portfolio accordingly in the space provide against each PC.

When acting as an Approved Witness you may not, guide, steer, prompt, advise, train, or coach a candidate in any way when they are demonstrating skills or actions required as part of a PC or corresponding key feature.



## The role of an Approved Witness

If a candidate appears inept and in your opinion they require training to acquire the skill or knowledge to fulfil the requirement of a PC, you must stop witnessing if it is clear the candidate will not satisfy the PC requirement.

You may consider the candidate would benefit from training and you may be prepared to offer training if the candidate is in agreement. At this point all witnessing must cease and ICR's closed off prior to the commencement of training. If the candidate becomes skilled in a task as a result of your help, any relevant PC may not be signed off until a candidate has completed the task unaided on a subsequent occasion.



## The role of an Approved Witness

When witnessing, you are required to accompany the candidate at all times during the completion of any part of an ICR.

You **must be close enough** to a candidate to observe that all requirements of a PC is fully achieved, that is, to be with a candidate at all times and in a position where you can intervene if required to maintain safe or legal practice. This could for example be; to ensure that a safe back stop is in place prior to a shot being taken, or that the correct use of a safety catch is demonstrated by the candidate. Another example could be if a high seat was used. Unless it was a two man seat, it might be difficult to fulfil the relevant witnessing activity. See also part 3 page of the Witnessing Briefing page 42.

When you are satisfied that a PC has been fully covered and achieved by the candidate you are witnessing either by observation, simulation and where appropriate by question or, a combination of all, you may sign off and date each relevant PC in the area provided within an ICR.



## The role of an Approved Witness

All evidence must be generated by the candidate and all actions are to be candidate led. To repeat and reinforce what has been stated previously; you are not permitted to help, train, steer, prompt or guide a candidate in any way during the witnessing of a PC.

*For example:*

If, during a stalk through woodland, you observe deer that a candidate has clearly not seen, it is not for you to draw their attention to any deer they have not observed otherwise you are fulfilling the PC, not the candidate.



## The role of an Approved Witness

If during an outing it becomes clear to you that the candidate is not spotting deer, you may decide that the candidate is lacking this skill and decide not to sign off the relevant PC. Rather than abandon the outing which is your decision to take, you could alternatively point out to the candidate a deer you have seen.

If the candidate can then confirm the animal is in the cull plan as agreed prior to the commencement of the outing, they could continue with the remainder or the ICR so that an opportunity to gather some evidence within the ICR was not wasted.

The PC which has not been signed off must of course be completed satisfactorily by the candidate under witness at another time.



## The role of an Approved Witness

During any outing used for evidence gathering, a candidate must clearly take the lead with you the witness, carefully following. You may decide that a candidate has insufficient skill or knowledge to complete a large proportion of an ICR and suggest the outing is abandoned and resumed when the candidate has obtained the necessary skills to complete.

You might offer to provide suitable training to the candidate however, if accepted, successful achievement during a training phase cannot form any part of the witnessing process and no PC's can be deemed to have been achieved.

If any such training is offered by you, then you must also advise the candidate what level of training is required, over what period of time and at what cost to the candidate if you propose to charge for your services.



## The role of an Approved Witness

Before any outing commences it should be decided and agreed which deer are to be shot within the ICR cull plan.

If a group of deer are stalked into, it is the candidate who must lead the stalk and determine which animal meets the agreed cull requirement and make this clear to you before talking the shot.

It is for a candidate to instigate inspection of relevant lymph nodes as required within the corresponding PC. You are not to prompt inspection or indicate the location of the lymph sites for a candidate.

If a head is removed by a candidate and discarded without inspection, the PC appertaining to inspection clearly must not be signed off. You might then wish to explain to the candidate why you are not signing off the PC of that occasion and then prompt the candidate to inspect the discarded head so they may practice or gain experience for when they repeat the task on a future occasion.





## The role of an Approved Witness

You can and should intervene if it appears to you that a candidate is about to do anything dangerous, unsafe or illegal.



In the example shown, if a candidate is not aware that they may have induced a muzzle blockage and cleared it, obviously it would be dangerous to allow them to carry on. PC 2.1 requires that a candidate handles a firearm safely at all times. Irrespective of what might be a faultless performance of firearm safety during the remainder of the day, this PC could not be signed off on this occasion.



## Questions Asked of a Candidate

The number of questions which an AW needs to ask are minimal as your role is primarily to observe the candidate performing without help or steering a task as detailed in a relevant performance criteria and key feature.

If you do ask a question which is relevant to a performance criteria and it adds weight to a candidate's evidence you may record your question and the candidate's answer in the witness notes section of an individual cull record.

When a candidate's evidence is completed and submitted for assessment, there will always be a number of questions an Assessor will need to ask a candidate. These questions will also include those covering gaps in evidence. For example, if there was no wounded deer, no abnormalities found or no larder used, the Assessor will cover these areas by questioning the candidate.



## Before Witnessing

Candidates will normally contact you by telephone or email to see if you are agreeable to act as an Approved Witness on their behalf. During this initial contact, if you are able to help and assist before meeting with a candidate you should try to do so. You should always discuss with a candidate the points detailed below:

- Establish as far as possible that the candidate is sufficiently skilled and knowledgeable to partake in and complete DSC2.
- Agree a time and place to meet with clear instructions given.
- Inform the candidate to arrive fully equipped to complete an ICR
- Tell them to bring their FAC, photo ID if they do not have a rifle and their proof of insurance.
- Ask them to bring with them the name and contact email address of their portfolio Assessor.
- Discuss and agree any cost implication for the candidate by using you as a witness.



# Questions

If you have any questions relating to this part of the DMQ Introductory AW Briefing, please contact DMQ to be referred to somebody most able to answer your question by emailing to:

[deermanagementqualifications@gmail.com](mailto:deermanagementqualifications@gmail.com)

Always provide your DMQ number in any communication and if you would prefer a personal telephone conversation, please give your telephone number. Include a brief description of what you wish to discuss and a member of the DMQ Working Group will contact as soon as possible.

**Please now read and understand Part 3**