

FOREST ROADS



Why build a forest road?

- Assists plantation inspection and management
- Provides access for timber transport.
- Good road design and construction improves the efficiency of timber harvesting and haulage.



Improves efficiency of timber harvesting

The process to receive approval to construct a forest road may take some time.



Important role in fire prevention



Provides recreation opportunities

Important component in an overall forest fire plan.

Enhances forest biodiversity and access for recreation.

Grants may be available to assist with the cost of construction of a harvest road.

Types of forest road

There are two main types of forest road – management track and harvest road.



A management track provides access to young forests

Management Track

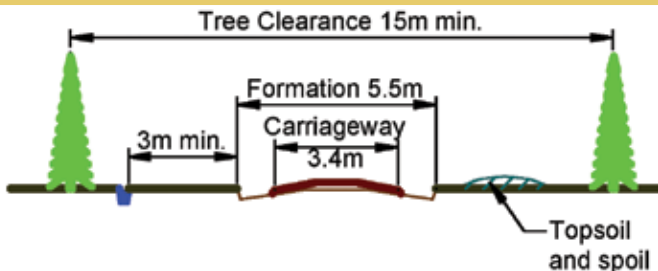
Constructed to improve access to and/or within a young forest for establishment and management purposes, this type of basic track may have an important fire protection role.

A management track may be upgraded to a harvest road later in the life of the crop.

Harvest Road

Constructed in advance of timber harvesting. The specification of this type of road is designed for the transport of timber by fixed axle and articulated trucks.

A harvest road will be designed to enable timber to be loaded and for timber haulage lorries to turn.



Typical harvest road cross section – flat / gently sloping mineral soil site

Planning

Planning for a forest road should begin at the design stage of a new plantation. The proposed route should take environmental and physical factors into account.



Forest road planning should begin at plantation design stage

A road application may be referred to prescribed agencies due to environmental considerations.

Consultation with the local authority may be required and this may take some time.

Where neighbouring land is being planted, a co-operative approach to forest road planning is encouraged.



*Good forward planning: please note unplanted
rideline for future road construction*

Road construction

The route of a proposed road must be surveyed by a qualified surveyor or engineer if forest area exceeds 20 hectares.

Provision to be made for a proper entrance, turning place and/or loading bays.



Road survey



Build road in dry weather



Completed harvest road

Construction works should be carried out by competent and experienced plant hire contractors with professional supervision.

Where possible, construction works should be carried out in spring and summer to minimise site disturbance.

The availability of road construction material, e.g. stone, gravel on site will substantially reduce costs and construction traffic on local roads.

The working life of a new road will be maximised by constructing it well in advance of use and allowing it time to dry and settle.

Road maintenance

All forest roads will experience wear and tear, especially during timber harvesting and will require maintenance. To remain in good working condition, forest roads require regular inspection. Maintenance of road surfaces, drains and sediment traps are essential.



Maintenance of vegetation encroachment is essential when roads are not being used

Roads and the environment

Road construction must be carried out in a manner that is compatible with environmental values and sustainable forest management.



Protection of water quality is critical during forest road construction and maintenance



Open spaces along a forest road encourage and enhance biodiversity

For further information

Contact your local Teagasc Forestry Development Officer or Forest Service inspector.

You can also log onto: www.teagasc.ie/forestry, www.coford.ie or visit Forest Service at www.agriculture.gov.ie/forests-service.

Photos: courtesy of Teagasc Forestry Development Department and COFORD.

Head of Forestry Development Department

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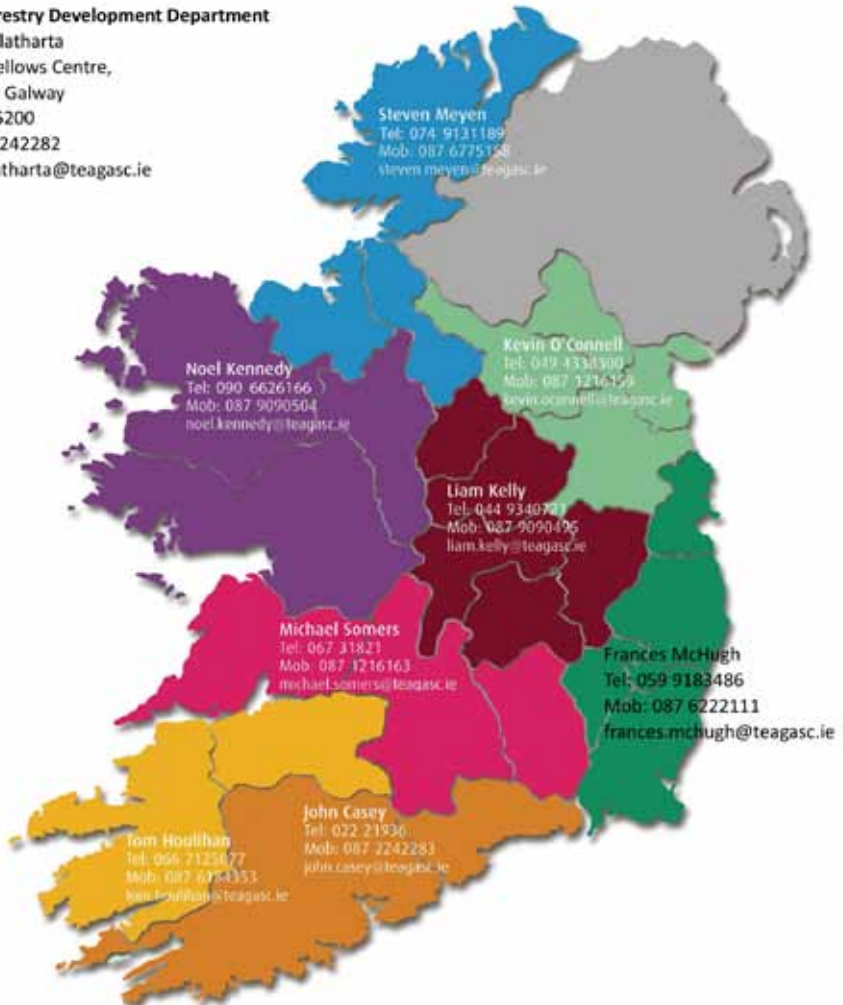
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