



Transporting Timber on Public Roads

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Consultation and Engagement Guidance (Scotland)

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Introduction

Scotland's forests and timber industries provide around 26,000 full time equivalent jobs and contribute £1bn to the Scottish Economy. They produce timber and wood products but also provide employment, climate change mitigation, improved biodiversity, renewable fuel, enhanced air quality, flood mitigation, recreation and public health opportunities.

Many millions of tonnes of logs are transported from our forests to timber processors each year reducing our reliance on timber imports from around the world. Timber haulage sometimes involves using rural roads that are not well suited to modern haulage vehicles. The roads may be structurally weak or very narrow with limited passing places. Lorries may pass close to residential areas and local schools with the potential to impact adversely on communities and other road users.

To minimise the impacts of transporting timber, representatives from local roads authorities (the councils), the forest industry and Scottish Forestry, have formed a network of Regional Timber Transport Groups (RTTGs) and a GB-wide Timber Transport Forum. The groups and the forum are independent groupings of interested parties, contributing their time freely and operating in a spirit of partnership.

They promote a range of measures to improve the sustainability of timber transport by producing Agreed Route Maps and through the continuing development

of good practice. The Regional Timber Transport Groups generally engage an adviser or officer to provide strategic support and to facilitate liaison between the forestry sector and the local authority where necessary. In most cases, however, forestry businesses and the local authority should liaise directly following the steps set out in this guidance.

Forestry in Scotland is regulated by Scottish Forestry under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018. Scottish Forestry regulates new woodland creation and provides grants for planting and managing woodlands. It also regulates the felling and restocking of trees through felling permissions, including Forest Plans.

Scottish Forestry approvals and permissions focus on activities within the woodland or forest but can also take account of impacts on the environment and communities. Scottish Forestry grants permission with conditions, these could include conditions relating to timber transport.

The 'local' public road network (including carriageways, footways, bridges and drainage systems) is managed by Local

Authorities, (the councils) who are the 'local roads authorities' under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. The Local Authorities have powers to apply certain regulations, restrictions and limits through Traffic Regulation Orders to maintain the road network and ensure the safety of all users. If necessary, they have the power to introduce weight limits to prevent damage to roads and bridges and can seek to recover costs where roads are damaged through negligence or where users fail to adhere to agreed protocols.

Permissions from the Local Authority are required when loading timber from roadside forests, as well as for various in-forest road works, for the creation or improvement of accesses onto the public road and for engineering works close to public roads.

The 'roads authority' for the trunk road network is the Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland.

Agreed Route Maps

The Regional Timber Transport Groups each develop Agreed Route Maps which are regularly reviewed. These categorise the public roads serving forested areas by their capacity to sustain timber haulage. The maps provide the trigger for a process of ongoing consultation and engagement.

Agreed Route Maps use the following definitions:

Agreed Routes are roads which can be used for timber haulage without restriction other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988. "A" roads (e.g. the A9) are Agreed Routes by default unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Consultation Route).

Consultation Routes are roads which are key to timber extraction but, for a variety of reasons, are not up to Agreed Route standard. Consultation with the Local Authority is required before any timber haulage takes place, and it may be necessary to limit the amount, timing or frequency of timber haulage, or to specify lower impact vehicles, to prevent damage. All minor roads ("B" "C" and unclassified roads), should be treated as Consultation Routes by default, unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Severely Restricted Route).

Severely Restricted Routes are particularly fragile or sensitive roads which should only be used for timber transport under a carefully supervised management regime agreed with the Local Authority.

Excluded Routes should not be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes may be formally restricted with a weight restriction or be close to being so. Consultation with the Local Authority is required to explore alternatives. In a few cases, roads are excluded in order to direct timber traffic onto alternative roads that are more suitable.



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The Consultation Process

Engagement with Local Authorities and communities is an important part of the partnership approach for managing timber transport on public roads.

Most haulage-intensive industries setting up in rural Scotland would need to obtain planning permission from the Local Authority which would consider the impact on their road network and on communities. Forestry is regulated by Scottish Forestry rather than the local authority planning system. Scottish Forestry does consult with the local authorities but there are limited processes to consider the potential for impacts from timber transport in advance.

The Regional Timber Transport Groups promote a partnership approach to address this but **it does rely on the forestry sector - the landowners, agents and works managers - initiating action throughout the consultation process.** In turn the timber industry should expect timely and constructive engagement from the roads authority and community organisations.

The **Timber Haulage Consultation Protocol** in Figure 1. sets out the key steps for engagement and who is responsible

for actions. The protocol uses the same terminology - the Duty Holder roles – used in the Guidance on Managing Health and Safety in Forestry.

In most situations, timber haulage can take place without limitations to timber traffic or road use. Where there are constraints however, it is vital that measures are agreed and adhered to by all parties: The cost of damaged roads can be much greater than the value of timber being harvested. The **Advisory Traffic Management Measures** set out in Figure 2. provide a suite of road and traffic management measures that can contribute to minimising the impact of timber transport in different situations. These are provided for guidance only. The various local authorities may well have different approaches suited to their roads and geography, developed through discussion with the regional timber transport group.

Timber haulage is a major interface between the forest industry and the public. Community concerns must be addressed constructively or they can negatively affect both local operations and the perception of the industry as a whole.

The Scottish Government has produced **Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land** supported by the Scottish Land Commission's protocol on community engagement. These set out what can be reasonably expected by way of engagement with those who are impacted by decisions taken about land management. The Timber Haulage Consultation Protocol suggests when engagement with communities should be considered and by whom. Where the impact of timber transport is expected to be significant, a more formal community engagement plan may be required.

Timber Haulage Consultation Protocol (Fig. 1)

1. Before submitting forest plans or felling permission applications	
The Landowner or Agent (Responsibility rests with the landowner. Agents should be specifically instructed to fully represent the landowner.)	<p>Liaises with the roads department of the Local Authority to identify likely road constraints to timber transport on Consultation, Severely Restricted and Excluded routes (remember all B, C and unclassified roads should be consulted on even if they are not categorised in the Agreed Route Map). Liaison with the Local Authority is not required for Agreed Routes but is still encouraged where there may be constraints.</p>
2. On Scoping	
The Landowner or Agent	<p>Proceeds with Forest Plan scoping or stakeholder engagement to provide Local Authorities and other stakeholders with an opportunity for early input on timber transport matters and to identify any issues of concern. This early engagement can also help inform the Local Authority's road maintenance programme.</p> <p>Where community issues are raised in the scoping exercise, informs the relevant Community Council of timber haulage plans and provides contact information for people with decision making authority.</p> <p>Addresses any issues raised regarding timber haulage on the public road network and incorporates mitigating measures into forest plans and felling permission applications.</p> <p>Where required, agrees a new or revised Timber Traffic Management Plan (see p.9).</p>
3. When planning new or improved infrastructure	
The Landowner or Agent	<p>Seeks consent to improve or create an access onto a public road or to carry out any civil engineering works on or adjacent to a public road by contacting the Local Authority roads department or, for trunk roads, Transport Scotland.</p> <p>Obtains Planning Permission and Roads (Scotland) Act permission from the Local Authority planning department or National Park Authority for any proposal to improve or create a new forest access onto a classified (A, B or C) public road.</p> <p>Considers how other haulage associated with forest management (such as low loaders and lorries delivering stone for forest roads) will be managed to ensure that the careful management of the road for timber lorries is not negated by other related traffic.</p> <p>*Note that forest road works also require prior notification to the Local Authority planning department and may require both an EIA screening opinion from Scottish Forestry and CAR approval from SEPA.</p>
4. On Assessing Felling Permissions, Forest Plans and Land Management Plans	
Scottish Forestry	<p>Consults with the Local Authority (both the roads department and the planning department) on forest plans and felling permission applications and will expect to see evidence of prior liaison between the applicant and the Roads Authority wherever public roads may be an issue. Any felling permission will take account of the information provided. Scottish Forestry grants permission with conditions, these could include conditions relating to timber transport.</p>
5. Prior to harvesting or standing sale	
The Landowner or Agent	<p>Identifies and establishes contact with the most suitable person in the Local Authority roads department to confirm timber haulage measures to be followed.</p> <p>Informs the relevant Community Council of timber haulage plans, where appropriate.</p> <p>Includes details of contacts, discussions, agreements or Timber Traffic Management Plan regarding haulage on the public road in sale particulars, tenders and contracts for timber sales.</p>

Timber Haulage Consultation Protocol (Fig. 1 cont.)

6. After the timber is sold but before haulage starts	
<p>Forestry Work Manager (timber purchaser or their harvesting agent)</p> <p>By clear agreement it may be that some or all of these actions are taken on by the Landowner or Agent (in continued dialogue with the Forestry Work Manager)</p>	<p>Acquires from the landowner or agent details of contacts, discussions, agreements or Timber Traffic Management Plans regarding haulage on the public road.</p> <p>Continues liaison with the Local Authority to confirm and agree the implementation of any measures required to address road limitations, to monitor road conditions, or agree measures to deliver the requirements of a Timber Traffic Management Plan, where one is in place.</p> <p>Considers taking a video or photos of the road condition prior to haulage.</p> <p>Continues to liaise with neighbouring forest owners who may be using the same roads for timber haulage.</p> <p>Confirms timber haulage plans to Community Council and engages with the concerns of directly affected neighbours, where applicable. Any community concerns should be dealt with promptly through constructive dialogue.</p> <p>Ensures haulage contractors, sub-contractors and their drivers are fully aware of timber haulage measures to be followed.</p>
7. During Haulage	
<p>Forestry Work Manager (timber purchaser or their harvesting agent)</p> <p>By clear agreement it may be that some or all of these actions are retained by the Landowner or Agent (in continued dialogue with the Forestry Work Manager)</p>	<p>Monitors road condition and reports any degradation to the Local Authority roads department.</p> <p>Stops haulage when conditions are unsuitable and before significant deterioration occurs.</p> <p>Continues to liaise with neighbouring forest owners who may be using the same roads for timber haulage.</p> <p>Updates the Community Council and directly affected neighbours, where applicable. Any community concerns should be dealt with promptly through constructive dialogue.</p> <p>Ensures haulage contractors, sub-contractors and their drivers are fully aware of timber haulage measures to be followed.</p>

Advisory Traffic Management Measures (Fig. 2)

Road Category	Road Definition	Advisory Traffic Management Measures
Agreed	<p>Roads which can be used for timber haulage without restriction other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988.</p> <p>“A” roads (e.g. the A9) are classified as Agreed Routes by default unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Consultation Route).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All timber haulage operations should comply with The Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice. • When using an existing forest access, the bellmouth onto the public road must be well formed and suitable in terms of horizontal and vertical alignment to allow safe access and egress. For access improvements or new accesses onto the public road, liaise with the relevant Local Authority to establish specific requirements (see Highland Council’s Technical Advice Note on Timber Extraction). • Put in place arrangements to monitor and maintain the condition of the forest access, ensuring water does not flow onto the public road and no mud or debris is transferred onto the public road. • Report any deterioration of the public road surface to the Local Authority immediately and stop haulage before significant damage is caused.
Consultation	<p>Roads which are key to timber extraction but, for a variety of reasons, are not up to Agreed Route Standard.</p> <p>Consultation with the Local Authority is required before any timber haulage takes place and it may be necessary to limit the amount, timing or frequency of timber haulage, or to specify lower impact vehicles to prevent damage.</p> <p>All minor roads (B, C and unclassified roads) should be treated as Consultation Routes by default unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Severely Restricted Route).</p>	<p>The measures set out for Agreed Routes will apply. Additional mitigating measures may be required for particular roads, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal restrictions – to avoid very wet periods and periods of winter freeze/thaw. • Reduced frequency of lorries – to allow time for the road to recover between lorry passes and minimise cumulative damage. Manage lorry timing to prevent lorries meeting on narrow roads or avoid busy times or school runs, to minimise disruption to local communities. • Vehicle and trailer configurations – use “wagon and drag” trailers (rather than articulated lorries) on narrow twisting roads. These have a narrower ‘swept path’ helping to minimise edge damage. It may be necessary to use smaller tractor and trailer units for short hauls to secondary loading points. • Reduced ground pressures - use lorries with twin tyres or wide ‘maxi’ tyres in conjunction with tyre pressure control systems that spread the load across a greater tyre footprint so reducing the impact on fragile roads (see Tread Softly; Lower impact vehicles for timber haulage). Multi-wheel axle configurations are available and traditional trailers can be underloaded to reduce axle weights on short hauls to secondary loading points, although reduced loads mean more trips. • Passing places – provide or improve passing places sufficient for road sightlines and volume of traffic. Widen corners where necessary. • Signage – erect temporary road signs to warn other road users (liaise with the Local Authority to establish signage requirements).

Advisory Traffic Management Measures (Fig. 2 cont.)

Road Category	Road Definition	Advisory Traffic Management Measures
Consultation (Cont.)	<p>Roads which are key to timber extraction but, for a variety of reasons, are not up to Agreed Route Standard.</p> <p>Consultation with the Local Authority is required before any timber haulage takes place and it may be necessary to limit the amount, timing or frequency of timber haulage, or to specify lower impact vehicles to prevent damage.</p> <p>All minor roads (B, C and unclassified roads) should be treated as Consultation Routes by default unless covered by one of the other categories (e.g. Severely Restricted Route).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed restrictions - driving slowly will minimise damage to junctions, corners and bridges from dynamic loading. Significantly reduce speed when driving on narrow roads through communities. • Community engagement – inform the local Community Council and particularly affected households or businesses of extraction dates, times and frequency of movement. Provide contact numbers for liaison purposes. (See also Appendix I Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Note). • Driver awareness – Ensure hauliers are fully aware of the road constraints and the measures agreed with the Local Authority and the community. Particularly sensitive roads may benefit from specific regular drivers, who know the road well and can monitor any degradation. • Other Haulage - Consider how other haulage associated with forest management (such as low loaders and lorries delivering stone for forest roads) will be managed to ensure that the careful management of the road for timber lorries is not negated by other related traffic.
Severely Restricted	<p>Roads which are particularly fragile or sensitive and should only be used for timber transport under a carefully supervised management regime agreed with the Local authority.</p> <p>Some Timber Transport Groups make more use of the Severely Restricted category than others. Where it is used, it tends to suggest that there will be significant constraints which will constrain or add cost to haulage operations.</p> <p>More recently the category has been linked to the production of a formal Timber Traffic Management Plan that sets out an agreed package of measures seen as appropriate to sustain the road.</p>	<p>The measures set out for Agreed Routes will apply, together with selected mitigating measures as listed for Consultation Routes.</p> <p>It may not be readily apparent why a road has been categorised as Severely Restricted so consult with the local authority and regional timber transport group. It may be possible to make improvements to the road that will overcome the primary constraints.</p> <p>Consider the feasibility of constructing additional forest road that could bring the timber out onto better public roads.</p> <p>Timber Traffic Management Plans – These are formal packages of appropriate measures to maintain and monitor the road that are agreed and shared with all forests exiting onto the stretch of road. Some are shown on the Agreed Routes Map.</p>
Excluded	<p>Roads which should not be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes may have a formal weight or height restriction or be close to being weight restricted.</p> <p>In a few cases roads are excluded in order to direct timber traffic onto alternative roads that are more suitable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluded Routes should not be used for timber transport. • Consult with the Local Authority to explore alternative routes.



Tam Treanor courtesy of Comfor

Timber Traffic Management Plans

Timber Traffic Management Plans are partnership arrangements designed to sustain timber haulage on the most vulnerable and sensitive roads, particularly those routes currently classified as “Severely Restricted” on the Agreed Route Map.

Timber Traffic Management Plans are only prepared for particularly fragile or sensitive roads, particularly where a number of different forests may be harvested at the same time. They are developed through consultation between the Regional Timber Transport Group and the Local Authority Roads Asset Manager to ensure that reasonable access to the public road network can be maintained for the timber industry, the local community and other road users. Where there are significant community concerns to be addressed, the relevant community council should also be involved.

If appropriate, a Timber Traffic Management Plan can be agreed between the Local Authority and a particular forest manager prior to the submission of any forest plan or felling permission

application to Scottish Forestry. Although developed initially by these two parties, the interim plan would be expected to subsequently apply to all timber haulage on the route and should be reviewed by the Regional Timber Transport Group.

All parties should be actively involved in agreeing and delivering the requirements of a Timber Traffic Management Plan and the names of all contributing parties should be shown.

Scottish Forestry has the power to grant a felling permission subject to conditions aimed at addressing a significant impact on the environment or a community. These could include conditions relating to timber transport.

The Regional Timber Transport Group can offer to play a role in monitoring or reviewing the plan where required.

Where two or more harvesting operations are expected to overlap, vehicle tracking systems can be used to help demonstrate adherence to the measures in the plan.

Individual Timber Traffic Management Plans for specific roads can include any of the mitigating measures listed in Figure 2. Advisory Traffic Management Measures.

If, despite the mitigating measures followed, road conditions deteriorate beyond acceptable levels, a more stringent scheme should be agreed and implemented as prevailing conditions dictate. Conversely, where improvements are made to the road, this may enable the relaxation of some measures or removal of the need for a Timber Traffic Management Plan altogether.

Stakeholder Engagement



Stakeholder Engagement: the process of involving people in the decisions that affect them.

Consult: To have regard for a person’s feelings or interests in making plans or decisions.

When?	Planning or developing activities e.g. new planting, revision of management plans, significant felling or haulage.	Management of existing activities e.g. timber transport, access and forest management interactions.	Tackling problems e.g. fly tipping, unauthorised mountain bike trails.
Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours • Community (community council, development trust, user groups) • Clients / agents • Legal interests e.g. wayleaves • Special interest groups • Scottish Forestry & statutory consultees • National NGOs • Vociferous detractors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours • Community (community council, local authority, development trust, user groups, local schools) • Clients / agents • Legal interests e.g. wayleaves • Special interest groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours • Community (community council, development trust, user groups) • Local authority • Local councillors, MSPs, MPs
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits • Small informal / formal meetings with key stakeholders • Telephone contact with key stakeholders • Attend meetings of relevant local groups • Website • Advertisements / articles in local press • Interactive workshop / event • Leaflet drop to all households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a forestry contact within Community council or similar • Advisory committee • Attendance at suitable local events e.g. shows, galas, etc • Newsletters • Annual surgery • Annual meeting with key stakeholders • Notice board at forest gate • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visits • Small informal / formal meetings with key stakeholders • Awareness raising via local press • Attend meetings of relevant local groups

Lessons Learnt

- One size does not fit all – it’s about the right thing at the right time. Knowing what works takes time.
- Speaking to people in advance of an activity rather than after can identify issues before they arise.
- Style and tone are as important as what is said / done.
- Make yourself known and available to stakeholders / communities as this can help avoid problems escalating.
- Listening skills are essential. Often foresters want to solve problems and take action, when just listening works.
- Take time to understand the problem. It may not be what you first think.
- Face-to-face always works better in difficult situations.
- Avoid ‘town hall’ style public meetings.
- Visual aids (but not just maps) and ‘active’ feedback sessions work well.
- Admit mistakes, rectify and move on.

Helpful Resources

The Timber Transport Forum

www.timbertransportforum.org.uk

Timber Transport Agreed Route Map

www.timbertransportforum.org.uk/maps/agreed-routes

Timber Transport Groups and Contacts

www.timbertransportforum.org.uk/groups

Highland Council Technical Advice Note for Forestry Extraction

www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/99/roads_information/5

Scottish Land Commission Protocol for Community Engagement in Decisions Relating to Land

www.landcommission.gov.scot/lrrs/communityengagement/

Scottish Forestry Public Registers

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/public-registers>

Scottish Forestry Felling Permission Application Guidance

<https://forestry.gov.scot/support-regulations/felling-permissions>

Scottish Community Councils

www.communitycouncils.scot/

Confor helplines

www.confor.org.uk/resources/helplines

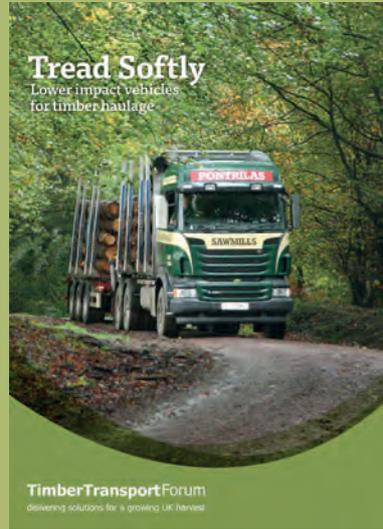
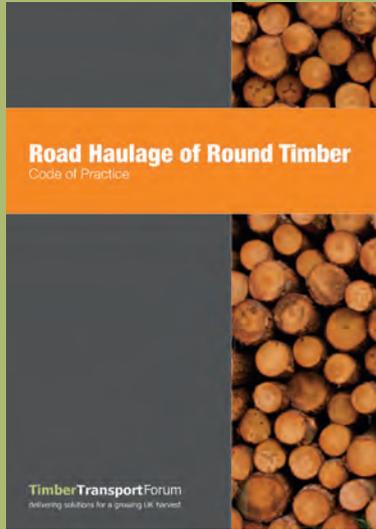
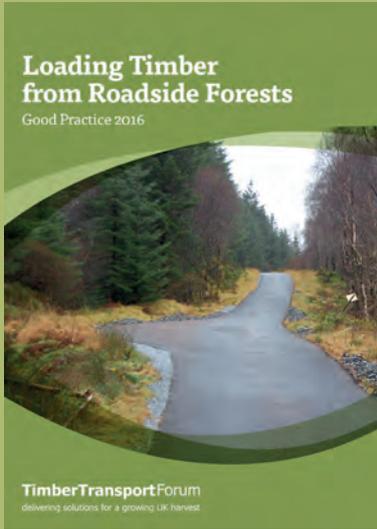
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