

11th February 2025

To all Registered Foresters

Circular 3 of 2025

Guidance on forest road and felling application processing where forests have been damaged by recent storms

The recent storms have caused extensive windblow damage across the country. As a consequence, the Department expects a significant increase in licence applications to be submitted for both forest roads and clearfell over the coming months.

Under the Forestry Act 2014, Windblow trees require a felling licence, as they will still need to be cut, harvested and removed. We are committed to making the application process as efficient and as fast as possible for forest owners, and in parallel we are exploring further options for a simplified approach, taking account of all EU environmental obligations.

The Department is now expediting the processing of windblow related licence applications to minimise losses in timber value and it will introduce a number of changes to its workflow and systems, will redeploy staff and prioritise windblow related applications. All such applications submitted on or before the 31 August 2025 will be prioritised. The same applies to applications already submitted to the Department and notified to the Department as being impacted by the storms.

To assist the Department in processing windblow related licence applications as quickly as possible the Department would ask Applicants and Registered Foresters to do the following:

New applications not yet submitted

- a) Continue to provide good quality detailed applications with clearly illustrated maps.
- b) Applicants and Registered Foresters submitting new felling and forest road licence applications will be asked (scheduled to go live in INET from Wednesday 12th February) to answer the following question on INET: '*Will this licence application be used in forests damaged by a recent storm?*'. The name of the storm can then be selected from a drop down.
- c) Applicants and Registered Foresters will also be asked (scheduled to go live in INET from Wednesday 12th February) to add an '*estimate of storm damage as a % of the application's total area*' in a data field beside this question for felling licence applications.
- d) Windblow damage should be mapped as separate 'Windblown' plots on the harvest plan map. Plot details to be shown on Part 3 of the application form where 'Land Use Type' is recorded as 'Blown' and 'Harvest Type' is 'WB'. This is to assist in giving the Department an overall picture of damage nationally.

- e) The Department recognises that there will be more of a reliance on available environmental datasets (e.g. EPA datasets, OS layers indicating aquatic zone locations, information from previous applications) and landowner knowledge when preparing applications where it is not possible to field survey all or parts of the area given the nature of these sites.
- f) Any Further Information Request (FIRs) issued by the Department should be turned around as quickly as possible by Applicants and Registered Foresters.

Applications already in the system

- g) The Department will prioritise any clearfell or road licence applications already in the system which have yet to be licenced, and which have been impacted by Storms Darragh and/or Éowyn. In order for the Department to prioritise these files, Applicants or their Registered Forester will need to email the Department at felling.forests@agriculture.gov.ie with the following information:
 - i. Email Subject: Application impacted by Storm
 - ii. Licence application number(s)
 - iii. Confirmation that this licence(s) application will be used in forests damaged by Storm Darragh and/or Éowyn.
 - iv. For clearfell applications only, estimate the % of the applications total area impacted by Storm Darragh and/or Éowyn.
- h) Windblow damage should be mapped as separate 'Windblown' plots on the harvest plan map. Plot details to be shown on Part 3 of the application form where 'Land Use Type' is recorded as 'Blown' and 'Harvest Type' is 'WB'.
- i) For thinning applications in the Department that need to be amended to a clearfell and replanting application, email Felling.forests@agriculture.gov.ie and provide the following;
 - i. Email Subject: Thinning licence application(s) impacted by Storm
 - ii. Thinning Licence application number(s)
 - iii. Confirmation that this licence(s) application will be used in forests damaged by Storm Darragh and/or Éowyn.
 - iv. a completed 'Part 3: Trees Proposed to be Felled',
 - v. a completed 'Part 4: Proposed Replanting' and
 - vi. a completed harvest plan to include a harvest plan map and reforestation map as described in the Departments's publication '[Standards for Felling and Reforestation](#)'
 - vii. in relation to quality and FIRs, a) and e) above apply.

Interaction with Reconstitution Ash Dieback Scheme

- j) Any areas of ash that will be submitted under the RAD or currently submitted under RAD must not be included in the felling licence application. For prioritisation purposes these forest owners or their agents can notify the Department (after

submitting a RAD application) by emailing [ForestryOnline @agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:ForestryOnline@agriculture.gov.ie) with the following information:

- Email Subject: RAD Scheme application(s) impacted by Storm
- Application number(s)

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