

# System to facilitate secure timber sales

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The security of timber movement in thinning or felling sales at both the time of removal and also after it leaves a forest is an important issue for timber growers. It is also important for buyers and harvesting contractors as it is not in their interest to have timber removed from a sale that they have harvested at their own cost or are depending on as part of their raw material supply.

The standard method of sale for thinnings is usually based on weight. When thinnings or fellings are sold on a weight basis, the forest owner will only get paid for that timber weighed over a weighbridge and reported back to him/her. The system summarised below aims to provide growers with a standardised procedure to assist in accounting for all timber removals from forests and to improve timber security. This model timber sales dispatch system has been developed by the Irish Timber Growers Association with funding assistance from the Forest Service. It was also devised in co-operation with a number of forestry companies, sawmills and timber processors and is now employed in many private sales. So how does this system work?



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## Summary procedures for timber sales dispatch system

- The seller should supply standardised forest dockets to the purchaser. These are available from the Irish Timber Growers Association at cost price plus postage (some sawmills will have a similar type forest docket which can be employed).
- In a sale the purchaser must notify the seller before each and every entry onto the forest property by way of at least 1 hour prior to arrival at the forest sending a notification text to the seller's mobile phone giving at least the Drivers name (Initials) and Lorry Registration Number. [There is also an additional measure where the seller can text back a specific permit number to the buyer who then writes this on the forest docket.] On receipt of the text from the purchaser, the forest owner can then organise to open the forest gate, or if it is already open, the owner will be aware that a load is to be collected.



*On arrival at the forest, the top copy of the forest docket (sections A & B) must be filled-in by the haulier/buyer and posted into an on-site sealed secure docket box prior to commencing loading. The docket box which should be locked by the seller so as the dockets cannot be removed by passers-by.*

- On arrival at the forest, the top copy of the forest docket (sections A & B) must be filled-in by the haulier/buyer and posted into an on-site sealed secure docket box prior to commencing loading.
- The docket box which should be locked by the seller so as the dockets cannot be removed by passers-by. No exceptions to this rule can be accepted and unauthorised loading should be considered theft.
- The seller should remove the dockets regularly so as he can check the dockets against the texts received. Spot checks should also be made by the seller to ensure there are no unauthorised trucks on site.

### Procedures for haulier/buyer at the mill/ weighbridge

- When weighing-in to the sawmill or on another weigh bridge, loads should be weighed giving the forest name and the forest docket signed on behalf of the buyer.
- When weighing-out of the mill/weighbridge to get the net weight, the weight docket should be attached to a copy of the forest docket and the buyer should then return a copy of these to the seller. Weight dockets with copy forest dockets attached should be posted to the seller on a weekly basis.

### Procedures for seller

- You as seller should retain all the text notifications from the purchaser in your phone so as you can check these off with the Forest Dockets to ensure you have all dockets for all notified loads. This should be undertaken very regularly so as any difference can be queried with the purchaser immediately.
- At regular intervals reconcile timber on roadside with records of timber removed from site. See Irish Thinning Protocol for guidance (see [www.itga.ie/downloads.asp](http://www.itga.ie/downloads.asp)).
- When carrying out site visits ensure any vehicles that have passed the docket box and are loading or laden have deposited a docket in the docket box.
- If unauthorised loading is detected instruct the driver to unload the timber and get the truck registration number and the drivers details to report to authorities.
- Reconcile the copy Forest Dockets and their attached weight docket received from the purchaser with the copy dockets collected from the on-site docket box.

*Opposite: Typical Forest Docket – there should be four copies for each individual docket.*

The above is a summary only and some details have been omitted to facilitate outlining the system in brief. For any



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growers who wish to get the full procedures and protocol they are available to all readers at [www.itga.ie/docs/MTSSApril2010.pdf](http://www.itga.ie/docs/MTSSApril2010.pdf). Most of the established timber purchasers have agreed to employ this system in private sales when requested.

A strong timber sales contract is vital in addition to the secure timber sales dispatch system and ITGA intends to commence work with other parties on a standardised timber sales contract for growers.

It is important that all timber sales are agreed between parties by having a deposit in place before any loads are removed and with subsequent pre-agreed instalment payments at various stages during the sale. Ideally the contract should be written so as the deposit should cover the value of all loads removed between each instalment. If the purchaser then defaults on paying an instalment when it falls due, then no further loads should be permitted to be removed until the overdue instalment has been paid. Where the deposit covers the value of timber between instalments then the seller will not be out of pocket if the sale is stopped when an instalment is not paid.

A contract should also ensure that best thinning practices, health and safety procedures, full insurance cover and other relevant practices are fully agreed to and implemented on site. It is always prudent to get advice from an independent forestry company or consultant before embarking on a timber sale.

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