

Code of Practice



Code of Practice between Coillte and
the Minister for the Environment and
Local Government.



coillte





Foreword

I am delighted to bring forward this Code of Practice between Dúchas the Heritage Service of my Department and Coillte.

I see this Code as a very positive statement by Coillte of its support for the conservation of our archaeological heritage. The Code will support a partnership approach with Coillte, which allows them to manage their forests without compromising the importance of our archaeological heritage.

Coillte is the single largest landowner in the country and is the owner of a rich archaeological resource as a result. In 2001, there were 1,371 known archaeological sites and monuments on Coillte's land countrywide. This number probably represents only a fraction of the actual resource, as many new sites are discovered during forestry operations such as planting and harvesting. The discovery of 25 previously unrecorded sites in 2001 and 2002 during routine forest operations demonstrates Coillte's commitment to preserving their archaeological resources. This Code, will I am sure, further facilitate the protection of these sites and at the same time greatly increase our knowledge of Ireland's cultural past.

The success of the previously published Codes of Practice agreed with Bord na Móna, the National Roads Authority, Bord Gáis and the Irish Concrete Federation offers a lead to other development bodies. Building on those earlier agreements, the present code further illustrates that development and conservation are not mutually exclusive. Establishing mutual trust for each other's position has been a notable achievement in these Codes.

The current programme of rapid infrastructural development must be implemented with due care for the environment and heritage. Through their adoption of this Code, Coillte are acknowledging the importance of conservation in carrying out their valuable remit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Cullen'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Martin' being larger and more prominent than the last name 'Cullen'.

Martin Cullen

Minister for the Environment and Local Government.



A Message from the Chief Executive of Coillte

Coillte Teoranta, the Irish Forestry Board, is pleased to launch this joint Code of Practice with the Minister for the Environment and Local Government. The company is committed to ensuring that our archaeological heritage is fully protected and will be there for future generations to appreciate.

Coillte is the largest landowner in Ireland. Our forest estate amounts to more than 442,000 hectares of land of which 86% is planted. It is Coillte's policy to protect all known archaeological monuments on our estate in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930 - 1994. We also abide by the Forest Service Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines. In addition, the 1,371 known archaeological monuments on our estate are mapped onto our Geographic Information System. This new Code of Practice will further strengthen the systems we have in place to protect archaeology.

In 1998, Coillte committed itself to the principle of sustainable forest management, and in 2001 we received certification from the internationally recognised Forest Stewardship Council that our forests are well managed in accordance with strict environmental, economic and social criteria. The protection of archaeology and cultural heritage is an integral part of this process. Archaeological monuments are at most risk during operations such as planting and harvesting, and in this context, an environmental impact appraisal is conducted prior to each operation with protective measures taken where necessary. Activities conducted by Coillte to ensure monuments are protected and enhanced include fencing-off monuments, creating access paths, and removal of trees that are planted too close to monuments.

We welcome this Code of Practice developed in partnership between Coillte and the Department of Environment and Local Government and are fully committed to adopting the guidelines set out in it to ensure our heritage is protected.

A black ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'Martin D. Lowery', written in a cursive style.

Martin D. Lowery
Chief Executive



Introduction

The purpose of this code is to provide a framework within existing legislation and policies to enable Coillte to proceed with the management of its forests in a manner that ensures the safeguarding of the State's archaeological heritage.

The code has regard to the policy of the Minister for the Environment and Local Government as outlined in Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (1999), the statutory mechanisms under the National Monuments Acts (1930-1994) for the protection of archaeological monuments and sites together, and the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

The code is based on an agreed set of principles and actions set out here.

The code is guided by the following agreed principles:

1. The Minister for the Environment and Local Government has a responsibility to protect the archaeological heritage and to exercise powers of preservation under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-1994 and in accordance with the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage.
2. Coillte has a commitment to the timber processing industry.
3. Forest operations have considerable archaeological implications that must be addressed given that the archaeological heritage is a non-renewable resource.
4. Coillte accepts the responsibility to finance archaeological investigation as an integral element of the costs of managing forests on the basis of the developer pays principle, and in accordance with the Minister's stated policy.
5. Coillte accepts that best practice involves making every effort to avoid direct impacts on archaeology taking account of design and safety implications.
6. Coillte and the Minister will adopt a partnership approach in securing the protection of the archaeological heritage as part of forest management.





7. Both parties agree that pre-planning mitigation offers an opportunity to minimise the impact on the archaeological heritage. In this context, Coillte already has an environmental impact appraisal process in place to ensure protection of these features
8. Either party reserves the right to appeal decisions.
9. Both parties agree to establish a team to monitor the operation of this code of practice and to carry out a formal review within one year of its adoption and at agreed intervals thereafter.



Agreed Actions

The Minister (through Dúchas the Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment and Local Government) will:

1. Undertake to process applications for felling licences and afforestation in a timely manner with due regard for the urgency and particular sequence of management timetables of Coillte.
2. Provide a fast track system of processing applications where emergency cases arise as a result of unforeseen circumstances.
3. Agree with Coillte's archaeologist a programme of archaeological investigation, monitoring or other archaeological resolution during all phases of forestry management.

4. Agree criteria for the purpose of identifying sites and areas of high archaeological potential, which will inform the extent of archaeological investigation to be undertaken.
5. Respond within four weeks to archaeological assessments and studies including those contained in environmental impact assessments together with any arising recommendations in respect of mitigation, so as to enable Coillte to carry out works such as planting and felling within a timescale acceptable to both parties.
6. Agree a strategy for advanced planning in respect of felling licence applications, which will enable Coillte to plan felling strategies well in advance of deadlines and with due regard to archaeological requirements.
7. Issue guidelines on the extent of work which can be carried out on sites identified under a monitoring licence, in the interest of assisting the formulation of licence applications and method statements for full excavations.





Coillte will:

1. Abide by the guidelines set out by the Forest Service in respect of Forestry and Archaeology July 2000 including any subsequent amendments and/or policy documents.
2. Appoint, or ensure the appointment of, an archaeologist to oversee the smooth running of the archaeological elements of forestry operations.
3. Consult with the Minister to ensure that he has adequate time to respond to archaeological studies prepared in relation to forestry projects.
4. Undertake investigation of the archaeological implications of forestry proposals at the initial planning stages with a view to informing the relevant process team and ensuring that full weight is given to archaeological implications in identifying the preferred modus operandi seeking to minimise the impact on known archaeological sites or areas of established significant archaeological potential.
5. Appoint, or ensure the appointment of a suitably qualified archaeologist who will deal with the process of identifying the potential impact of forestry proposals on known archaeology.

6. Preserve by record all known sites being removed by forest development.
7. Preserve by record any other monument or archaeological site of an agreed importance that may be uncovered during the development phases of the forest operation and allow sufficient time for such recording to be carried out to the satisfaction of the Minister.
8. Ensure that their archaeologist will liaise with the Forest Service on their work programme and its implications for the archaeological heritage, including, where necessary, attending site meetings with the contractor appointed to undertake forestry projects.
9. Liaise with the Minister in relation to implications for the archaeological heritage arising from any proposed changes to the contractor's forestry programme.



Summary of the Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines July 2000.

Landowners must inform themselves of recorded sites on their land.

1. Protection of archaeological sites will be achieved by:-
 - Identifying the site, and its full extent.
 - Creation of a buffer/exclusion zone around the site.
 - Written notification to Dúchas two months in advance of commencement of development.

2. Treatment of archaeological sites.
 - Boundaries of sites will be identified and exclusion zones marked.
 - Exclusion Zones will not:
 - Be less than 15 metres from outer boundary of the site.
 - Have stakes or strainers driven in them.
 - Be used for storage or any purpose resulting in damage.
 - Have any forest operations take place within them.
 - On all establishment/reforestation sites exclusion zones will be fenced off.

3. Pedestrian Access to Sites.
 - Pedestrian access shall remain throughout the rotation.
 - Existing access routes will be left unplanted.
 - Access paths will be 4 metres wide and unplanted from the nearest public road, forest road or track.
 - Access paths will be highlighted by the perimeter planting with non-commercial broadleaved species.

4. If Archaeological Objects Are Found.
 - Liase with Company Archaeologist, who will notify Dúchas, National Museum of Ireland and Gardai.
 - All work in the vicinity of the find will stop immediately.
 - No artefacts /objects will be moved.
 - A buffer/exclusion zone will be established pending investigation.
 - All operations will be relocated on a non-sensitive area of the site.



5. Afforestation & Reforestation.
 - Notify Dúchas prior to commencement of development.
 - Define the exclusion zone and clearly mark it on site.
 - Fence off the archaeological site / monument and its exclusion zone.
 - Ensure all staff are aware of the area to be excluded and other constraints.

6. Harvesting and Archaeological Sites.
 - Harvesting sites will be isolated site by site:
 - Using brightly coloured tape to outline the site and its exclusion zone.
 - Marking perimeter trees of the exclusion zone with bright paint.
 - Ensuring all the operational staff are aware of the exclusion zones and other constraints.

7. During harvesting operations contractors will:-
 - Use motor manual harvesting and bench felling on selected sites.
 - Use brush matting under wheels of processors and forwarders etc.



- Will not operate track machines on archaeological site without prior on-site consultation and agreement with the monitoring archaeologist.
8. Road Making & Archaeology.
- Exclusion zones will be clearly marked on the ground.
 - All staff concerned will be informed of the constraints.
9. Discovery of Unlisted Archaeological Sites / Monuments.
- Company Archaeologist will be notified immediately.
 - The site and a buffer zone of not less than 20 metres surrounding it will be isolated.
 - Restoration work will be carried out under an agreed archaeology plan.
 - The site location and details will be recorded.
10. Non Archaeological Sites.
- A buffer zone of 5 metres for mounding operations will apply.
 - A buffer zone of 2 metres in the case of planting.
 - Planted species should be broadleaved (preferably birch).
 - Old stonewalls should always be retained where possible.
 - If a section of wall is removed or damaged it should NOT be rebuilt, as the construction will differ from the original.