

Timber Harvesting and Sales Checklist

1. Seek Advice & Training



3. Plan the Harvest



5. Monitor the Harvest



Timber Harvesting and Sales



2. Know your Forest



4. Manage the Sale



6. Secure Your Timber

Optimising Your Timber Sales

Forests and woodlands are a highly valuable and sustainable resource. Good planning and timely coordination of timber sales adds value to the forest crop and can also be very rewarding for the owner. The process involves a number of key steps and significant help is available. As the forest owner gains knowledge and experience he/she will become familiar and more comfortable with the harvesting and sales elements involved.

A timely and stepwise approach to harvesting and timber sales is the key to success.

As each task is completed, the relevant box can be ticked. (✓)

1. Seek Advice and Training

Training, advice and information on the timber harvesting and sale process is invaluable and is also readily available through a range of sources:

Forest owners can build their own knowledge base and/or operate as part of a forest owner/producer organisation.

Teagasc forestry advisors provide independent advice and informative national and local events to help owners through this process.

Availing of the services of a registered forester is recommended to assist with harvest planning. *Note: Applications for all forestry grant aided activities require the input of a register forester.*

2. Know Your Forest

Sustainable management enhances forest productivity, profitability and environmental benefits. Your forest will need to be assessed for the following:

Tree species, forest age, forest area, growth rate and productivity

Forest stability (requiring an assessment of factors such as of tree height, soil type, drainage conditions and exposure levels)

Suitability for harvest/appropriate harvest type/suitable timing of harvest

Environmental/archaeological features and protection measures

Options regarding timber certification

In order to achieve this for young forests, inspection paths are essential. As your forest grows/increases in value, appropriate pre-harvest assessment is essential.

3. Prepare for Harvest

Timely preparation is needed for harvesting. Planning for the harvest should commence 1-2 years in advance. Make provision in good time for:

Health and safety/risk assessment
see Health & Safety Authority's *Code of Practice for Managing Safety & Health in Forest Operations* (www.hsa.ie)

A harvest plan and associated maps, based on a forest survey:
This plan should state and illustrate the planned harvesting (and, where applicable, reforestation) measures to protect social and environmental features. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's *Standards for Felling and Reforestation* set out universal standards that apply to all felling activity, undertaken under a felling licence under the Forestry Regulations 2017

Felling licence application and approval

Forest road or loading bay requirements (Allow time for potential grant application/approval, road construction and settlement)

Potential for coordination of adjoining sales between neighbouring forest owners

4. Manage the Timber Sale

Prior to marketing timber, become familiar with timber value, how it appreciates through thinning operations and the major potential value in the final harvest.

Become familiar with timber prices and the key factors that influence them including: species, harvest type, tree quality, timber volume for sale, site conditions, proximity to markets, number of bidders, prevailing market conditions

Timber can be sold in a number of ways including standing sales or harvested sale (roadside sale or delivered sale to sawmill):

- Ensure a range of timber markets are consulted
- Work with experienced/reputable timber buyers and contractors
- Talk to forest owners who previously harvested. Seek a number of references

When agreeing with your forester/timber buyer the negotiated price for your timber, ensure you have:

- Clarity on all costs involved and
- A clear indication of the net return per hectare available to you

Have an appropriate timber sales contract in place (e.g. the Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) *Template Tree Sales Agreement*). Timber sales contracts should be simple but explicit, fair and allow the forest owner to be in control of the sale.

5. Monitor the Harvest

You, as the forest owner and/or your agent should inspect the harvest operation following commencement and review regularly as it progresses to ensure the all procedures that were pre-agreed are being followed. Professional assistance can be money well spent.

Control plots can be used to regulate the practice and intensity of harvest

- Modern timber harvesters are equipped with a computerised measurement system (note: regular calibration of this system is essential).
- Computerised printouts will provide indicative information on the number of trees cut and the assortment breakdown over a specified time period

Stack measurement is also a simple and useful method to estimate timber volumes on site.

6. Secure Your Timber

Following harvest, it is important to consider the security of your timber. This can be facilitated in a number of ways:

Install a suitable (locked) barrier at the entrance to your forest to regulate access

Where possible, have a presence on site during timber haulage periods

Have an appropriate system in place which will help provide accountability for forest owners in reconciling the removal of all timber loads from the forest.
The ITGA *Model Timber Sales Dispatch System* (<https://www.itga.ie/images/pdf/MTSSApril2010.pdf>) provides a widely accepted template for managing timber sales in private forests

Discrete temporary cameras (along with appropriate signage) may be considered at strategic locations in the forest

Ensure prompt collection and removal of timber from the forest as agreed within the sales contract. This will also minimise the risk of drying of timber, which is particularly important where timber is sold on a weight basis.

Teagasc Forestry Advisors are available to support forest owners, providing advice and training on all forestry issues. For further information log onto www.teagasc.ie/forestry or contact your local Teagasc forestry staff.

