

Timber Sales Dispatch Systems

Fact Sheet

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A Timber Sales Dispatch System is a crucial tool for managing and coordinating the transport of harvested timber from private forests to sawmills or other processing facilities. Whether paper-based, digital, or semi-digital, its core function is to provide structured tracking and documentation to ensure smooth, secure, and accountable timber sales systems.

Transparent and reliable sales systems

- For private timber growers in Ireland, an effective timber sales system is especially important as timber harvesting increases from maturing privately owned forests. A growing number of small to medium-scale forest owners are now entering the market, making transparent and reliable sales systems more necessary than ever.
- The Irish Timber Growers Association (ITGA) has developed a standardised Timber Sales Dispatch System tailored specifically for Irish conditions. This system is a widely adopted tool that supports clear, structured, and secure timber transactions.



Core objectives of the System

The Timber Sales Dispatch System supports three main goals:

1. To support efficient woodland and harvesting operations;
2. To introduce a reliable accountability system that safeguards forest owners;
3. To establish a secure and transparent timber sales process for Ireland's growing private forestry sector.

As Ireland's private forestry sector matures, more landowners are carrying out thinning and clearfelling operations. This increases the need for a dependable system that tracks harvested timber, ensures timely payments, and documents every stage of the sale and transport process.



How the dispatch system works:

The dispatch system provides a clear and consistent protocol for both roadside and standing timber sales. It ensures that all stakeholders—including owners, foresters, contractors, hauliers, and mill buyers—follow agreed procedures and maintain transparency throughout. The forest owner or their forester is expected to supervise operations on-site. This includes verifying that the harvesting plan is being followed, tracking volumes extracted, and confirming that payment schedules match the actual movement of timber.

Once harvesting begins;

At the heart of the system is the Forest Docket Book. These pre-printed dockets record key details for every load removed from the site. Before a haulier enters the forest, they must notify the vendor (usually the owner or forester) at least one hour in advance—via text or WhatsApp—providing details such as truck registration and intended product type. The vendor then issues a unique permit number for that entry. Only during agreed hours may access be granted, ensuring tight control and security.

Before loading, the haulier must place the white copy of the docket into a secure docket box on site. Once delivered



to the mill or weighbridge, the load is weighed and the docket signed by a mill representative. The pink copy, along with the official weight docket, is sent back to the vendor. The green copy is retained by the purchaser, and the blue copy by the haulier. If WhatsApp is used, a photo of the signed docket may be shared with the group.

Each docket includes essential tracking information: docket and permit numbers, load date/time, vehicle and driver ID, timber product type, estimated tonnage, and destination. This makes it easy for owners to match what has been removed with what has been paid for.

The vendor (owner or forester) is responsible for monitoring timber volumes, carrying out site inspections, and ensuring that no unauthorised loading takes place. Timber sale contracts must also include legal provisions in case of breaches, such as removing timber without payment or deviating from agreed procedures.

Benefits to Private Growers

For private timber growers, an appropriate dispatch system brings peace of mind. It ensures timber is only moved with their full knowledge and consent and creates a clear audit trail in case of any disputes. For contractors and buyers, it provides reassurance that all loads are authorised and tracked. Most importantly, the system fosters trust and professionalism among all parties involved in the timber supply chain.

By promoting accountability, transparency, and timber security, a Timber Sales Dispatch System empowers private forest owners to manage and sell their timber confidently and responsibly, ensuring the long-term value of their woodland assets.

