

Road Haulage of Round Timber

Code of Practice

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TIMBER TRANSPORT CONFERENCE 2012
LAUNCH OF ROAD HAULAGE OF ROUND TIMBER CODE OF PRACTICE
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As a member of the Timber Transport Forum I am pleased to be able to present the latest edition of the Road Haulage of Round Timber Code of Practice. This is its fourth edition and today's launch represents the culmination of a great deal of work by a small group of specialists, to whom I and the Forum are very grateful. This Work has been carried out fully in the spirit of the Forum, by partnership working, co-operation and collaboration. The Code of Practice, which was first published in 1996, promotes best practice in timber transport and complements the best practice in timber transport management, given in the Forum's, other recent publication 'Timber Transport Management – Best Practice Guide', which was launched at the Welsh Timber Transport Conference, last year.

The revision was undertaken not because of any significant changes in Regulation or legislation; but when stocks of the third edition, which was published in the Spring of 2003, were nearly exhausted, we felt that rather than simply re-printing more copies, we should take the opportunity to refresh the document; to obtain some newer pictures and to incorporate the revised load restraint requirements that had been introduced in September 2006.

Of course, a great deal has happened in the sector since 2003 in terms of timber transport, not least in relation to new technology, driver training requirements and just in time working, and of course, many of our roads are busier than they were in 2003! Safety remains of critical importance too and we must continue to ensure that all operations are conducted in a safe manner, throughout the wood supply chain. We hope that this revised version will be of value to not only existing practitioners, but also those who are new to the sector.

As we have seen, there is much better communication between local authorities and the forestry industry than had been seen some years ago; this is a direct consequence of recognising the benefits of partnership working, so that everyone has a better appreciation of each others' needs and constraints. Improved understanding is always of value in either avoiding problems, or at least helping to resolve them quickly before they escalate into a major problem, with the risk of entrenched positions being taken and timber becoming landlocked as a consequence.

The underlying ethos of the Timber Transport Forum and the Timber Transport Groups is to promote better understanding through partnership working and the avoidance of confrontation. It has been very heartening to see the progress made by the Cumbria Timber Transport Group, and the newer North-East England Timber Transport Group, as well as the revitalisation of the North Yorkshire Timber Freight Quality Partnership.

Over the years, a number of important issues have been addressed by the Forum and best practice promoted. The development of Timber Transport Groups is a particularly noteworthy achievement.

A new campaign has been devised, which aims to raise awareness of the problems associated with vehicles running in convoy on weak roads; not only can this intensify damage to weak roads, but can also be an understandable concern to communities. The simple phrase of 'Wait a minute' will become more commonly seen and heard. There is increased appreciation of the value of appropriate traffic management regimes, which can address frequency of vehicle movements, vehicle configurations etc, which allow the movement of timber, whilst also helping to protect weak roads and address community concerns.

As with previous editions, the Code of Practice has been endorsed by not only forestry sector organisations, but also by a range of notable organisations in the public and private sectors, which are listed in the Preface.

The 4th Edition has been produced in a way that amply illustrates the benefits of partnership working. Our sector has an excellent record of partnership working over the years, with people being willing to work together for the common good. I would particularly like to thank all those who have helped to bring this 4th Edition to fruition, it has been a lot of work, as a huge pile of paperwork beside by desk confirms, and without the willingness of a small group of specialists in different parts of the industry, I would not be able to present the new edition today.

The Forum has a small Technical Working Group, which it has been my pleasure to co-ordinate. A great many individuals have helped us in preparing the revised edition of the Code of Practice, we are grateful to them all. Roland Stiven, our indefatigable Project Manager has been a constant throughout the process, ensuring we all stay on the straight and narrow. In addition, industry specialists, including Alasdair Ferguson and Richard Scott, as well as John Miller and John Scott, have provided very valuable experience from the sharp end, to ensure that its content is sound and practical. Members of the technical committees of the UK Forest Products Association and Confor have assisted too.

Obtaining high quality pictures of operations in our sector is often a problem, but thanks to the generosity of Richard Palmer and his colleagues at AW Jenkinson Forest Products, we had access to a professional photographer for location shots. As a consequence, we now have a much improved picture library.

Production of the document has been undertaken by Elaine Dick and her team at Forestry Commission Scotland, who have been professional throughout and have brought fresh eyes to the project. We must also Despite a great deal of work being done free of charge for the Forum, inevitably, hard cash has to change hands for some tasks and in this respect we would like to acknowledge financial support from the Strategic Timber Transport Fund, which has enabled the reprint to be completed. To all, our sincere thanks.

As well as being a general reference book for hauliers, haulage contract managers, forestry works managers, to name but a few, we hope that the document will also be of use to trainers who are developing Driver CPC courses for the forestry and timber sector.

Publication of the 4th Edition may also provide Regional Timber Transport Groups with the opportunity to arrange events to promote it and the best practice it describes. As we all know, it is always worthwhile to get people together and the new publication provides a good reason to do this.

Finally, we would commend the Code of Practice to everyone with an interest in forestry matters in general and timber haulage in particular. This publication is a valuable tool for presenting the sector in a professional and responsible light. We hope that you will find it to be of interest and assistance; there are plenty of paper copies available, not to mention a PDF version on the Timber Transport Forum website, please use them and distribute them widely.

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