ROAD OPENING:
INFORMATION FOR GROUP WATER SCHEMES

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Road opening:
information for group water schemes

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Introduction

This information booklet is designed to inform the boards/committees of management and operational staff of group water schemes of their legal requirements when carrying out excavation works on Local and Regional Roads. Anyone carrying out such works is required to have advance permission, must follow strict Health & Safety procedures and must ensure that road reinstatement works are completed to a particular standard, as per the 'purple book'.

For the purposes of this document, the following assumptions are made:

- The existing road is surface dressed
- The road has a traffic volume and low traffic impact number
- Road Works do not affect access to schools, public buildings, places of work etc.
- The works will not be within 10 metres of a bridge, culvert, embankment, or any other 'Special Engineering Difficulty' (see section 4.4.3 of the 'purple book')
- There are no footways, traffic lights or other features associated with urban environments.

[1.] **This information booklet should be read in conjunction with the 'purple book' itself and should not be used as a substitute document.**

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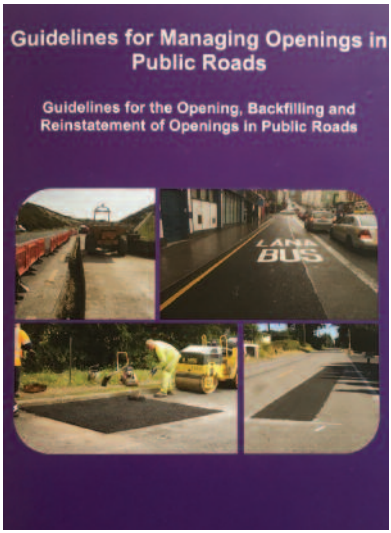
What is the 'purple book'?



A document titled 'Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads' is generally referred to as the purple book. Produced by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, it sets out guidelines for the opening, backfilling and reinstatement of openings in all public roads to ensure compliance with legislation. Originally developed in 2002, the purple book has been revised on several occasions and the latest version is available from the Roads Management Office, or may be downloaded at:
http://www.rmo.ie/road-licensing.html

Road Management Office

The public roads network in the Republic of Ireland is managed by individual local authorities (LAs) and by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The Road Management Office (RMO) was established as a local authority shared service to provide centralised supports for these statutory agencies, thereby improving road asset management. Further information about the RMO is available at: http://www.rmo.ie/

Road Opening Licence

A road opening licence provides permission from the relevant road authority for works to be completed. A GWS should never complete works without such permission.

Up to now, whenever any individual or organisation has wanted to carry out excavation works on a public road, prior permission has had to be sought from the relevant roads authority (normally the LA). Individual group water schemes, for instance, have traditionally applied for road opening licences by submitting an application form to the relevant LA, detailing the works to be completed. Licenses were issued on foot of such applications.

This system was complicated by the fact that each of the 31 LAs had its own application system, its own set of conditions and its own protocols for processing applications.

In order to streamline the application process, a single online system has been developed by the RMO called 'MapRoad Licensing' (MRL). This map-based system caters for all types of applications, utilises what has worked well in the past and makes improvements to the process where needed. The MRL system is now fully operational and anyone carrying out works on a public road should use the system.

Who should apply for a road opening licence using the MRL system?

For group water schemes, a road opening licence is generally applied for by either:

- The contractor completing the works
- The GWS (GWS manager or other authorised member)
- A suitably qualified person appointed by the GWS (consultant engineer etc.)

While the person making the application does not need to have completed training in traffic management, it should be noted that a detailed traffic management plan must be submitted as part of the application process. This plan should be completed by someone who is suitably qualified (see section on Training).

For the majority of group schemes, a suitably qualified contractor will have no difficulty in applying for the licence as part of the contract works. Schemes carrying out their own repair works must ensure that the staff involved are suitably qualified to work on roads. They must also ensure that the individual responsible for developing the traffic management plan is qualified to do so (see section on Training).

Types of Road Opening Licences

As part of the establishment of the MRL system covered in chapter 4 of the purple book, a new 'T' model licensing process has been developed establishing different types of road opening licences, depending on the severity of the impact of proposed works and also to improve associated response times. Before making any application, it is important to understand the different types of notifications and applications that can be made to ensure the correct licence application is made for the type of work being completed. The 'T' model licensing notifications are summarised in the table below:

"T" Model Licences and Notifications

Licence Application/ Notification	Description	Excavation Length (metres)	Excavation Area (m^2)	Duration Of works (days)	Application Period (Typical turnaround time by Local Authority)	Licence Validity Period	Works program Notification to Authority	Works phase start notification (Notification to Authority prior to commencement)
T1	Advance Notification for Large/ Complex Works •Requires prior consultation with Authority •Not a Licence to carry out works.	Over 1000	Over 1000	N/A	90 Days (Consultation)	1 year	N/A	N/A
T2	Application for Works of Moderate Impact	Between 100 and 1000	Between 100 and 1000	Between 5 and 30	14 Days	180 Days	7 Days	12.30 on previous day.
T3	Application for Low impact Works	Less than 100	Less than 100	Less than 5	3 Days	60 Days	N/A	12.30 on previous day.
T4	Notification of Emergency Works. Only applies to Water Main repairs which are immediately required in order to prevent, or reducethe risk of, loss, injury or damage to persons or property.	N/A	N/A	48 Hours	N/A	48 Hours	Before 12pm on the day after works commence.	
T5	T4 licence.	the Validity Period.						

While GWSs are most likely to be applying for T2, T3 and T4 road opening licences, a T1 should be considered where a scheme intends to carry out works with a significant impact on a road. A T2 application (moderate impact on a road) would be appropriate in relation to capital upgrade projects, whereas a T3 application (low impact) would be necessary for smaller road excavations and for planned repair works such as fixing bursts and leaks. However, if these works are likely to have a significant impact (e.g. burst repair works at a major junction on a national primary route that will impact heavily on traffic etc.), consideration should be given to applying for a T2 instead. A T4 emergency application can only be used in the event of an actual emergency situation. Prior notification should be given in advance where possible but notification is acceptable within 24 hours of the emergency works being completed, subject to certain conditions. A T4 should never be used to substitute for a T3 licence.

Registration and licensing process

Once the relevant licence required has been established, it can be applied for on the RMO website at: http://www.rmo.ie/road-licensing.html. First time users must register with the system and will be directed to a registration page that asks for contact details, the name of the road licensing administrator and insurance details confirmation. A template form is provided to be completed by the GWS insurer.[1] This is a once off task which is typically completed within 5 working days after which the registered user is provided with their own login ID and password.

The licensing process consists of 3 distinct phases; the application stage, construction (works stage) and a guarantee period.

Application: The MRL application itself is an easy to use step-by-step process during which the applicant is asked a series of questions re purpose of excavation, location, works programme, road assets affected, proposed traffic management and declarations. The application can be saved at any point and revisited at a later date prior to being submitted. To assist applicants, guidance documents are available to download from the RMO website at: http://www.rmo.ie/mrl-user-guides.html. These are an excellent tool to assist applicants at any stage of the process and include step-by-step infographics on how to make an application for each licence type. Further assistance is available directly from the RMO at support@mrl.jitbit.com.

[1] **See Appendix.**

Construction: Once a licence has been granted, works can commence within the timeframe specified as set out in Table 4.6.1 of the purple book (Section 4.3.2). Group water schemes should ensure that whoever is completing the excavation works is familiar with the road reinstatement requirements detailed in chapters 6 and 7 of the purple book. These must be adhered to. Please note:

- For temporary reinstatement of Surface Dressed roads, refer to drawing SD2 (p89)
- For permanent reinstatement of Surface Dressed roads, refer to drawing SD5 (p92)
- Delay set macadam is only permitted as a short-term surface repair with the approval of the road authority.

Schemes using contractors should ensure in advance that where road excavations and reinstatements are required, contracts must include provision for completion of the works in accordance with the standards outlined in the purple book. Any individual or organisation carrying out road works must ensure that they are compliant with the Construction Regulations and the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act.

Guarantee period: Completed works must be signed off by an approved and suitably qualified certifier (see section on Training). This requires the completion of a T5 notification. This confirms that all licensed works have been completed satisfactorily, to the required standards and licence conditions. The guarantee period for the works only commences once the T5 notification has been submitted and is for a minimum of 2 years.

Training

All persons carrying out road excavation and reinstatement works should be appropriately trained to ensure they have the necessary skills and competencies for such activities and works. GWS boards/committees of management are legally responsible for ensuring that anyone carrying out works on their behalf (be that a contractor or GWS staff or volunteers) has the required training completed. If not, such individuals should not be authorised to carry out such works by the scheme until the required courses are completed. At a minimum:

- All persons on site during road works should hold an up to date **Safe Pass** card and have successfully completed a **Health & Safety at Road Works** training course
- Any individual involved in traffic management, either on site or in traffic management plan development, should have completed the **Signing, Lighting and Guarding** training course
- Any individual operating machinery including excavators should have the relevant **CSCS ticket** for operating that machine.
- At least one individual on site should have successfully completed a **Basic Trench Reinstatement** training course.
- Anyone acting as approved certifier should have successfully completed an **Advanced Trench Reinstatement** training course and be registered on the MRL system.

All of the above training courses are delivered by the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG), https://www.lasntg.ie/.

Water Service National Training Group centre in Castlebar, County Mayo

Charges

At present local authorities are individually responsible for setting charges associated with road opening licences. The purple book outlines in detail the recommended breakdown of road opening licence charges as set out in Section 5.5. These include the following:

- Application Charge (Note: No charge for T1 notification)
- Long Term Impact Charge — non-refundable charge to cover the long-term effect on the road.
- Reinstatement Deposit — refundable if works are carried out in accordance with the conditions and guidelines
- Additional deposits may be required where road assets (e.g. road markings) are affected or where any additional inspections are required by the road authority.

It is envisaged that a national charging regime will be put in place shortly.

Points to Note

- A road opening licence is required for any works, big or small, completed on any public road and/or on road boundaries, regardless of the size of the road. The road is considered the area from ditch to ditch so that even works completed on the road verge require a road opening licence.

- Works completed in the road verges will be charged at a lower rate than works carried out on the actual road surface.

- Traffic Management Plans (TMPs) are required for all works, but will not be as detailed for certain works (e.g. those located along road verges). TMPs can be saved on the system and be edited and re-used for future applications.

- Multiple digs can be completed under a single licence. While there is a limit of 5 excavations in respect of a T3 , there is no limit for a T2. Details of each excavation must be given at the time of application.

- A GWS can get someone to apply for the road opening on its behalf. Most contractors are familiar with the system and can complete the application in the name of a GWS that is registered or in the contractors name. A GWS engineer can also apply on the scheme's behalf. There are a small number of consultants nationally that also specialise in this area.

- Anyone working on the public road must have all of the necessary Health & Safety qualifications as outlined in chapter 3 of the purple book. Otherwise they are putting the general public, themselves and the GWS in danger. A suitably qualified contractor must be procured by the GWS for works on the public road and the GWS should ensure that any such contractor meets the following H&S criteria: appropriate insurance cover, a H&S statement, method statements, relevant training (Signing Lighting & Guarding, Traffic Management, CSCS Tickets, Safe Pass etc.).

- The RMO is managing the application process centrally on behalf of each LA, but individual LAs remains responsible for reviewing, seeking clarification, approving or rejecting an application using the MRL system. While it may not be necessary for every application, it is recommended, that there be consultation with the LA in advance of any large-scale capital upgrade projects involving a T1 or T2 application.

- The minimum insurance cover required for any GWS working on a public road is:
  - —Public liability cover of €6.5 million
  - —Employers liability cover of €13 million

Please note that specific indemnity is required on these insurances to 'All Road Authorities in Ireland and the TII for the purposes of carrying out Road Openings/Excavations on Public Roads on behalf of the insured or third parties. Insurances must be maintained at the same level until the end of the guarantee period.

Appendix

Template Insurance confirmation from Broker/Insurance Company required when registering with MRL for the first time

INSURANCE COMPANY
or
INSURANCE BROKER
Headed Paper

Name and Address of the Insured Person/ Company

Date: Date of issue

RE: Confirmation of Insurance Details for the purposes of Road Openings and associated works on Public Roads under Licence or Consent of the Road Authority.

We, as Insurance Brokers/Insurance Company (Delete as appropriate) hereby confirm that Insurances are arranged and in place as follows:

Insured Company/Individual	Name of the **Insured** Individual/ Organisation
Company/Individual Trading Name	
Insured Business Description (as stated on the policy schedule)	Note : Must demonstrate that the Insured Business Description caters for the activities associated with Road Openings (e.g. Plant Hire Contractors, Civil Engineering Contractor or General Builders would be sufficient).

Employer's Liability Insurance	Insurance Company	
	Policy Number	
	Insurance Indemnity Level	Must be at least €13 million
	Expiry date	
Public & Products Liability Insurance	Insurance Company	
	Policy Number	
	Insurance Indemnity Level	Must be at least €6.5 million
	Expiry date	

Specific Indemnity is noted on these insurances to 'All Road Authorities in Ireland and the National Road Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland' for the purposes of carrying out Road Openings/Excavations on Public Roads on behalf of the insured or third parties.
Yours sincerely

Signed
on behalf of the Insurance Company/Broker

Dated
on behalf of the Insurance Company/Broker

RMO
An Oifig um Bainistiú Bóithre
Road Management Office

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