

**REGISTRATION**

**INSPECTION REQUEST FORM**

**WALKING TRAILS**

Sport Ireland Outdoors

The Courtyard

Sport Ireland National Sports Campus

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**Introduction**

Sport Ireland Outdoors maintains the National Trails Register, promotes standards for trails and accredits trails against these standards.

The National Trails Register is a listing of developed trails in Ireland which are accredited by Sport Ireland. Trails listed on the register are also displayed on the website [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors) providing information about trails to the public.

For a trail to become accredited Sport Ireland carry out a Trail Registration Inspection to confirm that it meets the standards both in terms of management of the trail and the trail infrastructure. To initiate an inspection this document must be completed and signed and dated.

Sport Ireland manage an insurance scheme for accredited trails. Where a trail crosses private land the landowner can be covered by public liability insurance if the trail is included in the scheme. Also, on request, voluntary trail management organizations can be covered by public liability insurance related to their management of the trail.

**Trail Registration Inspection**

A *Trail Registration Inspection* is required to confirm that a newly developed trail meets the requirements of the *Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland*, published by Sport Ireland. A copy of the standards document can be downloaded [here](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-06/criteria_1.pdf). A summary of the standards is provided in Appendix 1.

**Requesting a Trail Registration Inspection**

When all development work is completed on a new trail (or group of trails), the organisation responsible can request a **Trail Registration Inspection** by completing the forms in this document.The forms are used to ensure that a trail and the management group are ready before a registration inspection is organised. The completed Registration Inspection Request Form must be returned to Sport Ireland Outdoors.

via email to:

[outdoors@sportireland.ie](mailto:outdoors@sportireland.ie)

or by post to:

Sport Ireland Outdoors

The Courtyard

Sport Ireland National Sports Campus

Snugborough Road

Blanchardstown

Dublin 15

D15 PN0N

**Trail Inspection**

If the completed request form confirms that all requirements are in place, a registration inspection can be scheduled. The inspection involves a Sport Ireland Outdoors inspector visiting the trail/s. During the visit an assessment of the planned trail management system is carried out along with a survey of the trail.

A weighted scoring system is used to assess how well the requirements of the standards are being met. To be accredited a trail must meet all mandatory requirements and reach a score of 70% for all other requirements.

**Inspection Report**

After the inspection a Trail Registration Inspection Report is issued. This includes written details of the findings and the score sheet showing the results for the trail. The report will show if the trail has been accredited. If not accredited the issues which need to be addressed will be clearly identified.

**Cost for Registration Inspections**

There is a cost associated with doing Registration Inspections. To ensure the accreditation process remains sustainable it is necessary that the cost of the inspection is covered by the organisation managing the trail. Costs for inspection will typically be in the region of €300 to €700 per inspection depending on the length of the trail. This cost should be factored in when budgeting for the development of the trail. Please contact us to confirm a more exact cost when you know the length of your trail. The cost will be established in advance of the inspection and an invoice issued to the trail management organisation once the inspection report is finalised.

Sport Ireland does not wish this cost to be a burden on voluntary groups developing trails. If payment of the cost of the Registration Inspection is a significant issue please contact the office to discuss.

Once a trail is listed on the National Trails Register future trail audits will be free of charge.

**Trail Management**

The plans for the ongoing management of a trail will be a major focus of the Registration Inspection. It is critical that every trail has an active trail management organisation. A key function of the organisation is to ensure there is a system in place to carry out routine maintenance and regular monitoring of the trail. It is also important to retain records of this work. The implementation of a trail management plan as described here is now a requirement for accreditation of a trail and for inclusion in the trails insurance scheme.

For further guidance see *Summary of Trails Maintenance and Monitoring System in* Appendix 3 below.

A one day training course called *Trail Maintenance and Monitoring Planning* is available. Details can be found at [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/training-courses](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/training-courses) or contact [trailstraining@sportireland.ie](mailto:trailstraining@sportireland.ie)

**Insurance**

Trails which go through a Registration Inspection and become accredited are eligible to be added to the national trails insurance scheme managed by Sport Ireland supported by Local Authorities. This scheme applies to trails which cross private land on a permissive access basis. This policy provides public liability cover to private landowners and occupiers who have given permission for trail/s to be developed on their property and whose property/land is crossed or adjoins a trail.

**Please note that it is a condition of the trails insurance policy that the trail is**

* **developed and maintained in accordance with the ‘Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland' published by Sport Ireland**
* **Is used for recreational or leisure activities, excluding hunting (as defined by the Wild Life Act 1976 or amending or superseding legislation).**
* **is listed on the National Trails Register managed by Sport Ireland**
* **has in place a system for ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the trail managed locally by the trail management organisation. Any safety issues found or reported must be prioritised and addressed accordingly. Documented records of all monitoring or work carried out on the trail must be retained by the management organisation.**

It is recommended that Voluntary Trail Committees / Organisations have public liability insurance cover. If not covered by another policy, the national trails insurance scheme can also provide public liability cover to committees upon request to Sport Ireland.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **SECTION 1 – Trail Details for Inspection** | |
| 1 | Name of Trail(s) (please name each trail if more than one) |  |
| 2 | Name of Organisation/Committee Responsible |  |
| 3 | Name of Main Contact Person |  |
| 4 | Contact Address |  |
| 5 | Telephone Number |  |
| 6 | E-mail Address |  |
| 7 | Name of person to accompany the Sport Ireland Outdoors inspector during inspection.[[1]](#footnote-1) |  |
| **Please confirm the following** | | |
| 8 | Are the trail(s) open to the public? |  |
| 9 | Are there any safety issues on the trail(s)?[[2]](#footnote-2) |  |
| 10 | Have all relevant landowners and occupiers been consulted and given permission?[[3]](#footnote-3) |  |
| 11 | Have you got written agreement from each landowner? [[4]](#footnote-4) |  |
| 12 | Number of private landowners |  |
| 13 | Length of Trail(s) (km) (please give length for each trail if more than one) |  |
| 14 | How much of the trail(s) is on road (km)? |  |
| 15 | How much of the trail(s) is on National or Regional Road? |  |
| 16 | Are the trail(s) crossing any environmentally designated area e.g. SAC, SPA? If yes, have NPWS been consulted? |  |
| 17 | Are there any National Monuments along the trail(s)? If yes have the National Monuments Service been consulted? |  |
| 18 | Is the trail surface durable, robust and fit for purpose throughout? |  |
| **That the following are in place on the trail(s)** | | |
| 19 | Information / Map board(s) |  |
| 20 | All trail furniture e.g. stiles, footbridges, gates, etc. |  |
| 21 | All waymarking e.g. posts, finger signs, arrow discs |  |
| 22 | Car parking at the trailhead |  |
| 23 | Warning signs in place for unavoidable hazards |  |
| 24 | Protective tubing and warning signs on electric fences |  |
| **Trail Information** | | |
| 25 | Does the trail have online information? (Give website) |  |
| 26 | Should this site be linked from [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors)? (Yes/No) |  |
| 27 | Name of any map guide/brochure/flyer available |  |
| 28 | Have you attached or posted a scanned copy (Yes/No) |  |
| **Please provide a copy of map with the route clearly shown when returning this form.** | | |
| **I have personally inspected all the trail(s) and confirm they are ready for a trail registration inspection and listing on the National Trails Register.** | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **SECTION 2 – Trail Management** | |
| 29 | Is there a trail management organisation/committee for the trail? |  |
| 30 | How many people are involved in the trail management organization/committee? |  |
| 31 | What roles are assigned to the members of the committee? |  |
| 32 | Does the organisation/committee have a bank account? (Yes/No) |  |
| 33 | * Please supply your proposed routine maintenance plan showing maintenance tasks to be done. * Please indicate when/how often the work will be done and who will do it. (Names are not required – just a description of their role e.g. members of the committee or RSS workers etc.) * Also provide the proposed format for keeping records of maintenance carried out. |  |
| 34 | * Please supply your proposed trail monitoring plan showing what will be checked, how often it will be done and who will do it. (Names are not required – just a description of their role e.g. members of the committee or RSS workers etc.) * Also provide the proposed format for keeping records of monitoring carried out. |  |
|  | **Note: Appendix 3** attached provides guidance on trial Maintenance and Monitoring. These activities can be combined as one job if that suits best. However, for high usage trails it is good practice to carry out frequent monitoring of the trail for any issues. |  |

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **SECTION 3 – Insurance** | |
| 35 | Do you require inclusion on the Trails Insurance Scheme which provides indemnity to private landowners?[[5]](#footnote-5) . |  |
| 36 | Please list names of each trail to be listed on the scheme if more than one. |  |
| 37 | Do you require your management organization to be added to the policy? [[6]](#footnote-6) If yes see item 38. |  |
| 38 | Please confirm whether this organisation/committee has any public liability insurance cover through another policy. |  |
| 39 | Please confirm you accept the conditions of cover as follows:  **Each Trail:**   * **is developed and maintained in accordance with the 'Walking Trails Criteria for Ireland’ pubished by Sport Ireland** * **Is used for recreational or leisure activities, excluding hunting** * **is listed on the National Trails Register managed by Sport Ireland** * **has a system for ongoing maintenance and monitoring and records of this work.** * **has any safety issues found or reported prioritised and addressed [[7]](#footnote-7)** | Yes / No |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sport Ireland Training Courses (for information only). See** [**https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/training-courses**](https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/training-courses) **for listing** | |
|  | Has any member of your organization attended a training course run by Sport Ireland? |  |
|  | If so, please give name of course/s. |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **We agree to keep Sport Ireland** | | |
| Updated on maintenance and monitoring work on the trail (on request) | | |
| Informed of any temporary re-routes or trail closures | | |
| Informed of any changes to the information about the trail including any route/mapping changes so that [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors) can be updated | | |
|  | | |
|  | **Signed:** | **Dated:** |

**INFORMATION FOR NATIONAL TRAILS REGISTER**

**AND WWW.SPORTIRELAND.IE/OUTDOORS**

If you would like your trail(s) to be listed on the National Trails Register and promoted on [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors), the most comprehensive listing of trails in Ireland, please supply the following information

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | County |  |
|  | Format – Linear or Looped |  |
|  | ~~A~~scent - total ascent in metres |  |
|  | Grade - see p. 24 in <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-10/classification_grading_of_recreational_trails.pdf> |  |
|  | Time to walk the trail |  |
|  | Are dogs allowed? |  |
|  | Description of waymarking (colour of arrows and background) |  |
|  | Nearest town or village to start and distance from trailhead |  |
|  | Services such as car parking, shops, restaurants/cafés, accommodation etc. available in above |  |
|  | Any services such as car parking, toilets, shops, restaurants/cafés, accommodation etc. **at trailhead** |  |
|  | Start point (e.g. Church car park) |  |
|  | Grid reference of start point (e.g. R 393 098) |  |
|  | Finish point (if different from start) |  |
|  | Grid reference of finish point (e.g. R 393 098) (if different from start) |  |
|  | Name of any map guide available |  |
|  | OSI Discovery Series map sheet number/s |  |
|  | Trail management details for public to contact, regarding any queries or issues |  |
|  | Public transport (bus or train) |  |
|  | Brief description of trail (this should highlight the attractions, views, terrain and general impression of the trail rather than giving directions) |  |
|  | Map supplied in pdf format which is suitable for those using the trail |  |
|  | **Signed:** | **Dated:** |

**APPENDIX 1**

**Summary of Management Standards for Walking Trails**

There are some mandatory requirements which must be met for a trail to be registered as follows:

* **Must have permitted access from all landowners on the trail route**
* **Must have evidence of consultation with the appropriate authority if a route passes through a site of environmental, archaeological or architectural interest**
* **Must have a trail management organization/committee taking responsibility for the trail**
* **Must have a system for maintenance and monitoring of trails and records of this work.**
* **Must be free from any hazards which could potentially endanger a trail user.**

The following criteria must also be met for a trail to be accredited and listed on the National Trails Register and website – [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors). Following inspection, a trail will be scored against the criteria. The points available for each criteria are weighted. Criteria that are considered most important attract a higher score.

If a trail receives at least 70% of the score available for each of the main headings 1 to 7 below and at least 70% of the total score available, it will be considered accredited.

## Trail Management

1. There is a trail management organisation in place
2. There is a plan for routine maintenance, regular monitoring and repair (when required) of the trail
3. There is a method for keeping clear and up to date records of maintenance, monitoring and repair work carried out.

## Trail Information

Information about the trail should be available to users as follows:

1. ***Trail Map and trail information:*** (hard copy or printable from the internet):
2. Map showing the route, with sufficient detail such that it can be used for route finding on the trail, including – start/finish points, all junctions where the user could divert from the route must be clearly represented and any other recognised access points to the trail in addition to the main start finish points should be shown.
3. Information on the grade of the trail and a definition of the grades.
4. Length of the trail estimated time to complete and ascent in metres.
5. Description or visual example of waymarking used on the trail.
6. Brief route description.
7. Email or phone number for trail management organization.
8. Emergency services contact details.
9. Information on whether dogs are permitted on the trail.
10. The “Leave No Trace” principles or similar behavioral guidelines
11. ***Information Board*** at the trail head which includes:
    1. *Map showing route, start and finish point and a ‘you are here’ pointer.*
    2. Information on the grade of the trail and a definition of the grades.
    3. Length of the trail estimated time to complete and ascent in metres.
    4. Description or visual example of waymarking used on the trail.
    5. Brief route description.
    6. Email or phone number for trail management organization.
    7. Emergency services contact details.
    8. Information on whether dogs are permitted on the trail.
    9. The “Leave No Trace” principles or similar behavioral guidelines

## 3. The Route

The route must:

1. Be unobstructed and passable due to vegetation or other issues.
2. Warning signs must be in place warning of any hazards on the route which require users to take specific care e.g. electric fencing.
3. Have protective tubing on electric fences which need to be crossed by walkers.
4. Have livestock signs at entrance points to fields containing bulls or suckler cows.
5. Have warning signs for motorists on the road where it crosses N or R roads or other busy trafficked roads.

## 4. Waymarking

The trail must have:

1. Waymarking at all junctions or other locations where it is **essential** to direct the trail user
2. Waymarking correctly aligned at all junctions/locations where waymarking is **essential** to direct the trail user.
3. Waymarking positioned so that they are clearly visible to an approaching walker at junctions or other locations on the route where they are **essential** to direct the walker (travelling in either direction on a two way route).
4. Consistent waymarking (same type/colour) used throughout the route
5. Markers differentiated by colour, numbers or letter where there are multiple trails in the same area.
6. Yellow arrow and “walking man” symbol used only on National Waymarked Ways.
7. Temporary diversions on the trail must be clearly waymarked.

## 5. Trail Surface

The trail surface must be **durable, robust and fit for purpose[[8]](#footnote-8).**

It should be free from extended sections which have drainage problems, are severely waterlogged, boggy, have deep mud or are severely eroded such that it is difficult to walk through.

## 6. Vegetation and Litter Management

The route must:

1. Be free from invasive species of vegetation on the route.
2. Have markers unobstructed by vegetation
3. Be free from litter and other waste.

## 7. Trail Furniture and Services

Trail furniture includes:

* Information Boards
* Seating
* Markers
* Signage
* Stiles
* Gates
* Bridges
* Bog bridges
* Boardwalks
* Steps

1. Trail furniture must be designed, constructed, installed and maintained such that it is fit for purpose, robust, reliable and safe.
2. Walking surface on stiles, board walks, bridges or steps must have a suitable ‘non-slip’ finish.
3. Suitable off-road car parking space must be available at the trail head.

## APPENDIX 2

## Potential Safety Issues

* **Dangerous Furniture**
* Damaged, rotting or loose stile
* Damaged, rotting or loose sleepers, footbridges, boardwalks, bog bridges
* Damaged, rotting or loose handrail
* Dangerously slippery stile or steps without non-slip surface
* Dangerously slippery sleepers, footbridges, boardwalks, bog bridges without non-slip surface
* Unsupported timber stile steps
* Protruding nails on stile or crossing place
* Arrow plates with sharp edges protruding that may injure a walker
* **Fencing**
* Barbed wire that may injure a walker
* Loose wire or other items as trip hazard
* **Surface Dangers**
* Deep holes or collapsed drains in the path or track
* Dangerous river crossing or flooding
* **Signage**
* Exceptionally dangerous roads without signs to warn motorists of walkers
* Dangerous cliffs, mines or quarries located near the trail without warning signs
* Timber felling operations without warning signs

**Please Note:**

This list is not exhaustive. It gives some of the most common safety issues found on trails. However, issues can arise that are not included [here](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-06/criteria_1.pdf)

**APPENDIX 3**

**Summary of Trails Maintenance and Monitoring System**

This a summary the key elements of a trail maintenance and monitoring systems as recommended by Sport Ireland Outdoors. Best practice when managing a trail ensures that four key elements are in place.

1. **Regular Maintenance**
2. **Regular Monitoring to check for issues**
3. **Repair of any issues found**
4. **Record keeping (of all of the above)**
5. **Regular Maintenance:**

* Routine work carried out periodically – e.g. cut back vegetation. drains cleared etc.
* This should be planned in advance and documented
* Different tasks may be done at different intervals depending on the need – e.g. one a year, twice a year etc.)

**Example of a Maintenance Plan/ Schedule and Records**

A blank template of this form can be downloaded [here](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/trail_maintenance_and_monitoring_plan.docx)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Element** | **Task** | **When** | **Comments** |
| Trailhead | Map Board | Clean | March | Done |
| Entire Loop | Litter/rubbish | Pick Up | Monthly | Done fridge dumped in car park. |
| First Laneway | Vegetation | Cut Branches | Apr/ Jun | Done |
| Bridge | Drains | Clear/Open | Apr | Done -Drain collapsed needs work |
| Etc. |  |  |  |  |

1. **Regular Monitoring**

* Regular monitoring of the trail should be carried out to ensure it is in good condition.
* The frequency of monitoring on a trail is decided locally but should be determined by how much the trail is used, the amount of infrastructure on the trails, seasonal impacts and any other factors that might be relevant.
* Trail monitoring can be carried out at the same time as maintenance activity if that suits.
* Trail monitoring can be undertaken by anyone that is comfortable walking in the outdoors (or by the person/ people doing the maintenance if that suits).
* When monitoring check for any issues which would potentially have a negative impact on a visitor to the trail e.g. waymarker missing, slippy stile etc.
* Check for other issues which may need to be addressed e.g. water eroding the trail
* Record issues and comment as per example below.
* If a minor issue can be fixed easily – fix it.

**Example of Monitoring form and Records**

A blank template of this form can be downloaded from the Publications & Resources [here](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/trail_maintenance_and_monitoring_form.docx)

The blank form also lists a number of things to look out for when monitoring a trail.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item No** | **Location / Reference** | **Issue / Description** | **Done / Comments** |
| 1 | Stile from field to road at Crohan’s Cross | Barbed wire attached to handrail | Removed barbs, met farmer so he knows about it. |
| 2 | French River  Ref KL17-3 | Footbridge broken | All slats damaged/broken. New bridge needed. Took photos. |
| 3 | Larkin’s field, by the trough | Waymarker loose | Tightened, packed with stones. Grand for now but may need concrete in future. |

1. **Repair of any issues found**

* If there are any issues recorded when monitoring a trail this needs to be identified and further work needs to be planned and organised.
* A worksheet to document what is required can be used **(example below)**
* Repair work may require additional tools, material or expertise. Larger jobs may need outside help e.g. a contractor
* Issues which would potentially cause injury to a trail user should be treated as a priority
* If an issue is considered to be a high risk the trail may need to be closed while the issue is addressed.
* Issues on an easy grade trail may be more significant than at the other end of the spectrum on a difficult trail where users should be more capable and more experienced.

**Example of Repair Worksheet**

A blank template of this form can be downloaded from the Publications & Resources section [here](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2020-01/trail_repair_worksheet.docx)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reference:** | KL17-3 |
| **Issue Location:** | Trail section from Bridge to Road |
| **Issue Identified:** | Drain on northern side collapsed and broken, water running onto path. Starting to cause damage. |
| **Work Required:** | Re-build full drain (approx. 200 metres) |
| **Person/s Assigned:** | RSS (John Smith, Patrick O’Malley) |
| **Tools / Resources Required:** | 2 x RSS; 3 days  Shovels, mattocks, picks, wheelbarrow, buckets  Re-build using existing material – stone, gravel in situ. If more needed, can request. |
| **Comments:** | 1 x small trailer of building stone required to line and secure drain.  Cost €90 |
| **Date Completed:** | 26/5/17 |

1. **Record keeping**

* A plan and schedule for maintenance and monitoring should be documented
* Record all maintenance and monitoring work done and issues found.
* Record any repair work.
* Use your own templates or the ones shown above for record keeping (all available for download from [www.sportireland.ie/outdoors](http://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors))
* Using the forms described above will provide most of the record keeping required for a Maintenance and Monitoring System
* To keep a summary of all work carried out it is recommended that a log should be maintained recording each time any work is done on the trail.

**Note: If you already have a system in place which deals with the maintenance and monitoring of trails, ensures any issues found are addressed and records are maintained there is no requirement to change anything. Just provide an update to Sport Ireland as described in the following instructions.**

**Please contact us at 01 8608839 or** [**outdoors@sportireland.ie**](mailto:outdoors@sportireland.ie) **if you need any help or advice**

1. It is essential that a person nominated by the Management Committee accompanies the Sport Ireland Outoors inspector to discuss any changes/recommendations that are required. **This person must be familiar with the trail.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Potential Safety Issues list included in Appendix 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If land is rented to an occupier, permission should be obtained from both the landowner and the occupier. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It is good practice to have a written agreement with landowners [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Indemnity insurance is required for all trails which cross private land. It is possible for all developed and approved waymarked trails to be included under a policy administered by Sport Ireland. Note that insurance for sections of the trail on land owned by state bodies is not covered by this insurance policy. It is essential that if the trail is on any such land, this has been agreed with the bodies concerned. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. To provide Public Liability insurance for your Management Committee in relation to their work on the approved trail/s. Addition to this policy only applies if the organisation is not covered for the management of trails on any other public liability insurance policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Appendix 2 for examples of some potential safety issues [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. **“Fit-for-purpose” i.e.** if a trail is aimed at inexperienced walkers, children, family groups etc, it should be relatively wide, flat and have a reasonably smooth and compact surface. It can then be considered to be “fit for purpose”. Another trail developed for experienced walkers, perhaps in remote or upland areas, may have a surface which is substantially narrower, steeper in gradient and extremely uneven but also be “fit for purpose” because it is intended for a different type of user. See ‘Trail Classification and Standards’ issued by Sport Ireland Outdoors for further details. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)